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NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

*190*

OF THE

**PARABLES**

OF

**THE NEW-TESTAMENT,**

ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE TIME IN WHICH THEY

WERE SPOKEN.



**BY THOMAS WHITTEMORE.**

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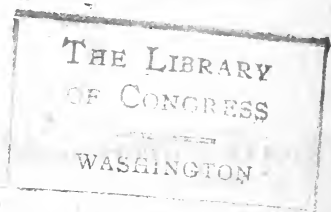
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## DEDICATION.

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**To the Rev. Hosea Ballou :**

RESPECTED BROTHER:—Having brought the following work to a close, I am impelled by a sense of my individual obligations to you, and of the debt of gratitude under which you have laid the Universalist community by your long and unremitted services, to make this insufficient acknowledgment. When you was about my age, you made the Parables of the New Testament the subject of particular and careful study, and at that time produced your highly valuable work which has since passed through repeated editions, and been very generally read by the religious denomination to which we belong. I am a humble follower in the path which you marked out. This work, on which I take the liberty to inscribe your name, was

commenced before it came to my knowledge that you intended *revising* your own. I rejoice that you have bestowed on the *third* edition the fruit of your study and reflection, since its first appearance. It may not be improper to add, that this work has been prepared and published with the knowledge and encouragement of the respected booksellers, who possess the copy right of your Notes.

There will be found, respected Brother, a close agreement between our application of the Parables. The principal difference is this: I have brought forward, in defence of the views we entertain, the testimony of commentators of various denominations; and I have endeavoured to make the Parables better understood, and account for the imagery used in many of them, by a reference to the laws, customs and habits of the eastern nations. I regret that I have not been able to attain this part of my object to a fuller extent.

In the hope that your valuable life and labors may be continued yet many years, I subscribe myself affectionately yours,

THOMAS WHITEMORE.

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## NOTES ON THE PARABLES.

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### Parable of the Axe.

MATTHEW III. 10—LUKE III. 9.

*"And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."*—Matt. iii, 10.

THIS parable was spoken by John the Baptist to the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism. Matt. iii. 7. He rebuked them severely for their wickedness, and inquired who had warned them to flee from the "wrath to come." The expression here rendered "wrath to come," is translated by Dr. Campbell the "impending vengeance," and unquestionably refers to the awful judgments which then awaited the Jews in the destruction of their nation. He then requires them to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, or the proper fruits of reformation; and exhorts them not to depend too much on their descent from the patriarch Abraham, for God was able to raise up children unto Abraham even from inanimate things. He did raise up children unto Abraham from among the Gentiles, whom the Jews regarded as stocks and stones, and who were represented as coming and sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in

the kingdom of the Messiah. The Jews were not only proud of their ancestry, but they relied on it for safety in times of public danger and calamity ; and hence the rich man in the parable (Luke xvi. 24,) is represented as calling on Abraham as his father, and begging him to send relief.

To show them that the destruction of the nation was to be total, John says, "the axe is laid unto the root of the trees." It is not a few branches which are to be cut off, the tree itself must fall. As the tree which beareth not good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire, so shall it be with this nation. They are corrupt, they are a seed of evil doers, they bring forth the fruit of sin ; God shall cause them to fall, and they shall be fuel for the fire of divine judgments.

The figure which John here employed, he unquestionably derived from the Jewish prophets. The destruction of Egypt is described by Jeremiah in very similar language. Jer. xlvi, 22, 23. "They shall march with an army, and come against her with axes, as hewers of wood. They shall cut down her forest, saith the Lord." The fall of Assyria is described in the same manner by Ezekiel. "The Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature, and his top was among the thick boughs. \* \* \* Therefore thus saith the Lord God : Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height ; I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen : he shall surely deal with him : I have driven him out for his wickedness. And as strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him : upon the mountains and in

all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him." Ezek. xxxi, 10—12. See the whole of the chapter. Isaiah also says, "Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forests with iron, and Lebanon shall be a mighty one." Isa. x, 33, 34.

In the view which we have given of this parable, commentators of all denominations agree. Adam Clarke, in his Commentary on the New Testament; Kenrick, in his Exposition; Lightfoot, in his Harmony of the Evangelists; the Continuators of Poole's Annotations; Dr. Hammond, in his Paraphrase and Annotations; Bishop Pearce, in his Commentary; Dr. Gill in his Exposition, and others, too numerous to mention, give the same explanation we have given. Although the passage was formerly by some applied to a future state of punishment, such an application is now abandoned except by the ignorant and indiscreet.



## Parable of the Winnowing Fan.

MATT. III. 12—LUKE III. 17.

*"Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."*—Matt. iii, 12.

As in the first parable the destruction of the Jews was foretold under the figure of cutting down

a tree, and casting it into the fire, so in this the distinction that was to be made, at the time of that calamity, between the believing and unbelieving part of the nation, is represented by the separation of wheat from chaff, the former of which was gathered into the garner, the latter was burned with "unquenchable fire." The threshing floors of the Jews were built in places well exposed to the wind, and advantages were taken of strong winds for the purposes of winnowing. By the use of the "winnowing shovel," a translation which Campbell prefers to the fan, the body of threshed grain was thrown into the wind, which separated the lighter from the more solid parts. The chaff, of no value, was consumed, but the wheat was gathered into the granary.

This figure was perfectly just, and the propriety of it was afterwards shown by matter of fact. Jesus Christ did thoroughly purge or cleanse his threshing floor. The chaff was separated from the wheat. The unbelieving part of the house of Israel was separated from the believers. The former were destroyed by the fire of the judgments which came on Jerusalem, and which burned until the nation was wholly extirpated, for it could not be quenched. The latter were preserved. Perceiving the signs which Jesus had pointed out as precursors of the overthrow of Jerusalem, they fled into the mountainous parts of Judea, (Matt. xxiv. 16,) where, like wheat in the granary, they were safe from the raging element which devoured the chaff.

The more ancient Jewish writers were in the habit of representing nations about to be severely judged, as grain on the threshing floor. Thus Isaiah xxi. 10: "O my threshing, and the corn of

my floor, that which I have heard of the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you." And in Jeremiah xv. 7: "And I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land; I will bereave them of children, I will *destroy* my people, since they return not from their ways."

The phrase "*unquenchable fire*," has been by some adduced to prove the doctrine of never ending punishment. If the explanation we have given of this parable be proper, (and we are supported in it by writers of the highest note who believed in endless misery,) we cannot see how this "*unquenchable fire*" can be supposed to exist in the future state at all. The threshing floor was not there, nor was the winnowing shovel there, nor was the operation of separating the chaff from the wheat done there; and why the burning of the chaff should be supposed to take place in some other state of existence, we cannot imagine. The husbandman generally burned his chaff where it accumulated after the operation of threshing and winnowing; he did not think of taking it away into some other part of the land and burning it. The fire which is mentioned in the parable, was the fire of divine judgment which fell on Judea, and it was called unquenchable, inasmuch as it did not subside until the work of destruction was fully done. But for a more full exposition of the phrase "*unquenchable fire*," see the notes on Mark ix. 43—48.

## Parable of the Salt of the Earth.

MATT. V. 13.

*“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.”*

THIS parable occurs in the Sermon on the Mount, which appears to have been addressed particularly to the disciples of Christ. “When he was set his disciples came unto him; and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, &c.” vers. 1, 2. That Jesus was addressing his disciples seems further evident from verses 11 and 12. “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely *for my sake*. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you.”

The disciples were “the salt of the earth.” Every one knows the preserving qualities of salt. In the hot climate of Judea, it was so necessary a thing, that no meat could be preserved sweet, though but for a short time, without it. The disciples, from their knowledge of the doctrine of Christ, and their efforts to spread it in the world, would perform the same office for mankind that salt does for animal food; they would save men from corruption and impurity in their doctrines and practices.

*“But if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?”* The application of this is very easy. It is a common thing for salt, when exposed to the

air in hot countries, to lose its saline quality. Maundrell, in his book of travels, describing the valley of salt, speaks thus : " Along on one side of the valley towards Gibul, there is a small precipice about two men's lengths, occasioned by the continual taking away of the salt ; and in this you may see how the veins of it lie. I broke a piece of it, of which that part that was exposed to the rain, sun and air, though it had the sparks and particles of salt, *yet it had perfectly lost its savour* ; the inner part which was connected to the rock, retained its savour as I found by proof." If the disciples should lose the savour of the divine word, how could they benefit mankind ? The church of Christ did in time lose its savour, and during that time it exercised no good influence upon the world. - "*It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*" Adam Clarke gives a paragraph from Schoetgenius, which may with propriety be introduced in this place. " There was a species of salt in Judea, which was generated at the lake Asphaltitis, and hence called *bituminous salt*, easily rendered vapid and of no other use but to be spread in a part of the temple, to prevent the slipping in wet weather. This is probably what our Lord alludes to in this place." Christians, without the power of divine truth, would be equally useless ; and would be rejected as insipid salt, or the vilest substances.

## Parable of the Light of the World.

MATT. V. 14, 15.

*"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house."*—Matt. v. 14—15.

THIS parable, like the preceding, was spoken to the disciples; and the design of it was to induce them not to be ashamed of him and his words, but to make an open profession of their faith before the world.

"Ye are the light of the world." They were the repositories of truth; and as truth was moral light, the disciples, as sources of it to mankind, are called "the light of the world." As God made use of the sun to give light to the natural world, so he employed Christians to illuminate the minds of mankind by shedding upon them the rays of divine truth. Adam Clarke says, "*light of the world* was a title applied to the most eminent Rabbins. Christ transfers the title from these, and gives it to his own disciples, who, by the doctrines that he taught them, were to be the means of diffusing the light of life throughout the Universe."

Jesus next refers to the importance of their shewing this light. "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." It is supposed that he drew his figure from the city of Bethulia, which was situated upon a mountain, in plain sight of the spot where he delivered these instructions. With this view Maundrell says, "A few points towards the north (of Tabor) appears that which they call the mount of



beatitudes, a small rising, from which our blessed Saviour delivered his Sermon in the 5th, 6th and 7th chapters of Matt. Not far from this little hill is the city *Saphet*, supposed to be the ancient *Be-thulia*. It stands upon a very *eminent* and *conspicuous* mountain, and is seen far and near. May we not suppose that Christ alludes to this city, in these words of his, "A city set on a hill cannot be hid."

"Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." Those who make themselves acquainted with the truth, and hesitate to profess it before men, are chargeable with the same folly with the man who should light a candle, and then hide it under a bushel. The very object of lighting a candle is to give light—the object of hiding it would be to conceal that light; and it is therefore preposterously absurd that those who light a candle should put it under a bushel. Truth is moral light. Those who ignite the torch of the mind with its holy flame, should not endeavor to hide the light thereof; but let it shine before men, that others may see it and glorify God. Jesus would not that any should be ashamed of him. "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." The apostle exhorts his Hebrew brethren to "hold fast the *profession* of their faith without wavering." Truth is not a thing of which man may be ashamed; and hence the exhortation is highly proper, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." At the death of Christ, "when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God." He professed that Jesus was a righteous person.

So by manifesting our faith before mankind, we shall bring them to believe in Christ, and thus will they glorify our Father in heaven, as the centurion did.

This parable furnishes a severe reproof to those of the present day, who have not courage to avow the convictions of their own minds. What they are persuaded is truth, they keep hidden. Professed ministers of the gospel are sometimes guilty of this unchristian practice. The love of the world, and the fear of man, sway them with a stronger influence than a desire to do their duty. They "light a candle, and put it under a bushel."



## **Parable of the offending Hand or Foot.**

MATT. V. 29, 30 : XVIII. 8, 9—MARK IX. 43—48.

*"And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire, Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."*—Mark ix. 43—48.

As this parable is one which has been often misapplied, and, as it has been generally used in defence of the doctrine of endless torment, and moreover, as it is now thought to be one of the principal

supports of that sentiment, we propose to examine it at some length, and make the notes as particular as possible.

1. We shall show what is intended by cutting off a hand, or a foot, or plucking out an eye.

2. What is intended by entering into "life" (ver. 43) or "the kingdom of God" (ver. 47.)

3. The true sense of the word "*hell*," and of the phrase "*hell fire*."

4. Consider the words, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Vers. 44, 46, 48.

5. Illustrate the proposition, that it was better to part with the offending member, than to be cast into "*hell fire*."

1. What is intended by cutting off a hand, or a foot, or plucking out an eye. The evident sense of the figure is, *let nothing prevent you from embracing my gospel, and entering into life*. By observing Matt. v. 28, it will be perceived that Jesus had been speaking of a sin, into which men were led by the instrumentality of the eye. He then immediately adds, "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee." Forego all gratifications inconsistent with virtue, and the moral laws of my kingdom; for it is better so to do, than by giving yourselves up to sin, to be totally destroyed. Archbishop Newcome says on these words, "if thy hand offend thee, &c. "This is a strong eastern manner of expressing that seductions to sin, and particularly stumbling blocks in the way of openly professing the gospel at that season, should be avoided at all events; and that the causes of guilt and apostacy should be removed, whatever favorite gratifications were foregone, whatever temporal evils were endured."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ballou has taken

<sup>1</sup> Newcome's Observations, Charlestown, 1810, pp. 32, 33.

a little different view of this subject. "The evident meaning of the Saviour," says he, "seems to be this: if one of your nearest connexions in the world, even if one as dear to you as a hand, should oppose your yielding obedience to the gospel, part with this dear connexion rather than part with divine truth. And though you thereby feel as one who has lost a hand, yet what you gain is more than what you lose. In this connexion Jesus mentions the cutting off of a foot, and the plucking out of an eye, for the same cause as the cutting off of the hand; and it is very evident that this recommendation was given on account of the opposition that was constantly in exercise against the cause of truth, and which he knew would increase unto grievous persecution."<sup>1</sup> The views taken by both these writers may be considered just. No temptations, no friends, nothing on earth, should have hindered men from entering the kingdom of Christ; every thing must have been foregone when put into competition with this; since, in that age, the greatest calamities ever known fell on the enemies of the Son of God.

2. What is intended by entering into "life," or the "kingdom of God." That these two phrases are synonymous will be evident by comparing vers. 43 and 47. To enter "life" in the scriptures, is to enter into the belief and enjoyment of the truth. Hence the Saviour saith, "THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." John xvii. 3. Here the knowledge of God is called "*eternal life*." Again, in John, v. 24, we read, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath everlasting life*, and

<sup>1</sup> See Lecture Sermons, p. 217.

shall not come into condemnation, but *is passed* (i. e. is already passed) from death unto life." John says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother abideth in death." 1 John iii.

14. These passages certainly make the subject plain; and shew that coming to the knowledge and enjoyment of the truth is "entering into life."

Now this is precisely what is meant by entering into "the kingdom of God." The kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, both signifying the same thing, are put for the spiritual kingdom of Christ, which he came to set up among men.<sup>1</sup> John the Baptist commenced his ministry by saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven *is at hand*."

Matt. iii. 2. When Jesus began to preach, he announced the approach of his moral kingdom in the same manner. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven *is at hand*."

Matt. iv. 17. In the instruction, which Jesus gave his apostles, when he sent them out, he says, "as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven *is at hand*."

Matt. x. 7. His kingdom was not afar off, it was at hand; it was not in another state of existence, it was here on the earth; it was the *moral reign* of Christ among men. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "the kingdom of God is come unto you."

Matt. xii. 28. On another occasion he said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, lo here! or lo there! for behold the kingdom of God *is within you*," or *among you*.

Luke xvii. 19, 20. To enter into the kingdom of God, was to embrace, profess and obey the gospel. Whosoever did this was un-

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Campbell's Version of all the passages where these phrases occur, and his Preliminary Dissertation on the same subject. See also Adam Clarke on Matt. iii. 2.

der the government of Christ ; he was in the *reign* of Christ ; he was in the *kingdom* of Christ. And as all the real disciples of the Redeemer were saved from those tribulations which fell on the unbelievers of that age, Jesus warned his followers that no consideration whatever should induce them to decline entering into the kingdom of God. These views will be more fully confirmed as we proceed.

3. Let us seek for the true sense of the word "hell," and of the phrase "hell fire." The Greek word here rendered "hell," is *Gehenna*.<sup>1</sup> This word, as every person of common biblical science knows, signified the valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem. It is a compound of two Hebrew words, *ge*, the land or the valley, and *Hinnom*, the name of the owner. It was there the cruel sacrifices of animals, and sometimes children, were made to Moloch, the Ammonitish idol. This place is sometimes called *Tophet*, as some think from *Toph*, a word which signifies a drum, because drums were beat to drown the cries of the suffering children ; or according to others, from a particular fire stove in the place. In the reign of the good king Josiah, the idolatrous worship into which the Jews had been led, was broken up, and Gehenna was defiled, and made the receptacle of the filth of Jerusalem. A continual fire was kept burning, to destroy car-

<sup>1</sup> There are four words rendered *hell* in the Bible, viz. *Sheol*, *Hades*, *Tartarus*, and *Gehenna*. *Sheol* is a Hebrew word; and of course is always found in the Old Testament. It occurs in *sixty four* instances, in *thirty-two* of which it is rendered *hell*, and in the other *thirty-two*, *pit* and *grave*. *Hades* is a Greek translation of *Sheol*, and always has the same meaning. It occurs *eleven* times, *ten* of which it is rendered *hell*, and once (1 Cor. xv. 55,) *grave*. *Tartarus* does not really occur at all, but a denominative verb derived from it, which is rendered "*cast down to hell*." It is found *once* only, in 2 Peter, ii. 4. *Gehenna* occurs *twelve* times, and is uniformly rendered *hell*. In the common English version, the word *hell* occurs, in both Old and New Testaments, *fifty-five* times.

casses thrown in ; and, in a word, Gehenna became as abominable under the reign of Josiah, as it had been sacred during the idolatrous worship of the Jews. In process of time, as all writers agree, Gehenna came to be a place of punishment where criminals were caused to suffer death by burning ; and in this sense the Saviour uses the word when he says, "but whosoever shall say thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire," i. e. the fire of Gehenna.<sup>1</sup> With such abhorrence and dread, under all these circumstances, did the Jews regard this place, that they used it as a figure of dreadful woes and judgments ; and so we find it used both in the Old and New Testament. Thus in Jer. xix. the destruction of Israel is foretold ; and in summing up what he had said the prophet adds, ver. 12, "thus will I do unto this place saith the Lord, and to the inhabitants thereof, and *even make this city as Tophet.*" Here Gehenna is certainly used as a figure to represent Jerusalem under its tribulations. We recommend the reader to peruse the whole of Jer. xix. See also Jer. vii. 31—34. Jesus used the word in the same sense. Of this we think there cannot be the shadow of a doubt. He said to the Pharisees, "ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the *damnation of Gehenna?*" Matt. xxiii. 33. He immediately adds, "Verily I say unto you, *all these things shall come upon this generation.*" Ver. 36. Whatever Jesus here meant by the "*damnation of Gehenna,*" he certainly confined to that generation ; and can there be a question in the mind of any judicious

<sup>1</sup> On this passage, the learned Parkhurst, a strict believer in endless misery observes, "*Gehenna of fire* does, I apprehend, in its *outward* and *primary* sense, relate to that dreadful doom of being burnt alive in the valley of Hinnom."

person, that he referred to the judgment impending over Jerusalem? He refers to these judgments again in Matt. xxiv. 21. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." But here he is particular to say, "This generation shall not pass till *all* these things be fulfilled." Ver. 34. From these quotations from the Scriptures the subject must, we think, be regarded as settled, that Gehenna was used by the prophets, and by Jesus Christ, as an emblem of the calamities which befel the Jews in the destruction of the city, and overthrow of the nation.<sup>1</sup> Under this view of the

<sup>1</sup> On the word Gehenna are staked the last hopes of those who defend the doctrine of punishment in the future state. Their zeal in contending that this word was used by Christ to favor that doctrine, is certainly proportioned to the desperateness of their cause. But can there possibly be any dispute, that Jesus meant by the "damnation of Gehenna," in Matt. xxiii. 33, the judgment with which God was then about to visit the Jews? "Verily I say unto you," said he, "all these things (this "damnation of Gehenna" being the most important he had mentioned) shall come upon this generation." Ver. 36. And to what did Jesus refer, Matt. v. 22, by the "fire of Gehenna," except to the fire of the valley of Hinnom, in the literal sense? The learned Parkhurst, an eminent orthodox critic, as we have already quoted, takes this view of the subject. *Lex. sub. voc. Gehen.* Adam Clarke, another believer in endless misery, took the same view. *Com. on New Test. in loco.* We cannot perceive why the "judgment" and the "council," mentioned in this passage, may not be applied to the future state with as much propriety as the "Gehenna of fire."

Now in reference to the ten other passages in which Gehenna occurs, they should be explained by the help of these. In the Old Testament the valley of Hinnom is made a figure of the temporal punishment of the Jews. This is unquestionable. When Jesus spoke of Gehenna to his disciples, would they not understand him as using it in the same sense? When he threatened the unbelieving Jews with the "damnation of Gehenna," would not they understand him to use the word in the sense in which their own prophets had used it? Jesus never intimated, nor is there a single intimation thrown out by any New Testament writer, that this word is to have a widely



subject, the "hell fire" spoken of in the parable, forms a perfect contrast to the "Kingdom of God"—the one was the happy portion of the believer in Jesus; the other was the sad lot of those who were regardless of his teachings and admonitions.

different signification in the New Testament from what it bore in the Old. To us it seems highly probable, that when Jesus threatened the Jews with the "damnation of Gehenna," he had in his mind the declaration of Jeremiah that God would make Jerusalem like Tophet.

To this it may be replied, that notwithstanding Gehenna never bears the sense of *future punishment* in the Old Testament, yet in the time of Christ it did have that signification, as used in common language among the Jews, and by their theological writers; and therefore, it is asked, would not the Jews have so understood Christ in his use of the word? We answer no, even if this had been the case; for did he not say concerning the "damnation of Gehenna," "all these things shall come on this generation?" Whatever, therefore, *their* views of Gehenna were, they could not have misunderstood him in *his* view of it. But it is far from being a settled question, that the Jews in the time of Christ did understand by Gehenna a place of punishment in the invisible world. That the Pharisees believed in punishments after death we do not deny; but Jesus explicitly admonished his disciples to "take heed and beware of the leaven (i. e. doctrine) of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Compare Matt. xvi, 6 with 12. If Jesus regarded the doctrine of future punishment, in which the Pharisees believed, as of any importance, why did he not make an exception of that sentiment when he gave the above admonition? But that the Jews in the time of Christ used the word Gehenna to apply to future punishment, has never been proved. That word, as Mr. Balfour has shown, (*Inquiry*, 2nd Ed. pp. 239, 240) does not occur in the Apocrypha. The Targums have not been sufficiently examined by any author who doubted the common opinion. "Before we ought to be satisfied with regard to their bearing on this subject," says a careful writer, "it appears to me that the following points should be clearly ascertained: 1st. Whether the *oldest* of them, those of Jonathan Ben Uzziel and Onkelos, do in fact use the word Gehenna to denote a place of future torment: for all the others are of too late a date to be used as evidence. 2. Whether it is probable that even *those* Targums are as old as our Saviour's time; for I understand that this is a disputed question among critics; and that the celebrated Bauer and Jahn bring them down to the second or third century."

On the whole, there is no evidence yet ascertained that the Jews ever used Gehenna in reference to *future punishment*, as early as the time of Christ.

4. Consider the words, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," vers. 44, 46, 48. There would be no necessity of giving these words a separate consideration, they are so evidently to be explained in a figurative sense, as we explain Gehenna itself, were it not that much use has been made of them by many people in proving the doctrine of endless misery, because it is said the worm *shall* not die, and the fire *shall not be quenched*. Let it be remarked then, that these are the same expressions which the prophets had applied to the temporal calamities of the Jews. Thus Isaiah says, "And it shall come to pass, *that* from one new-moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me : for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched ; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." lxvi. 23, 24. It will not be pretended that this passage refers to any troubles which are to befall the Jews in another state of existence, since it was to happen where time was measured by *new-moons* and *sabbaths*. The prophet Ezekiel describes the destruction of Israel in similar language. "Moreover, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face toward the south, and drop *thy word* toward the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field ; And say to the forest of the south, Hear the word of the LORD ; Thus saith the Lord God ; Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree ; the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burned therein. And all flesh shall see that I the LORD have kindled

it: it shall not be quenched." xx. 45—48. Now no one will pretend that this language has reference to any other than temporal judgments; and yet, to say the least, it is as expressly asserted that the fire shall not be quenched, as in the parable before us. More passages might be quoted in illustration of this point, if necessary; but the above are a sample of the rest, and will suffice. To be "cast into hell fire," was to be made to suffer the *damnation* of Gehenna, which Jesus assured the Pharisees should come on that generation. The fire was called unquenchable because it was not quenched; it consumed all the chaff; it effected the complete destruction of the nations cast into it. This we are confident is the true application of the bold figure.

5. Illustrate the proposition, that it was better to part with the offending member, than to be cast into "hell fire." After the foregoing remarks on this parable, it cannot be necessary that much be said under this head. The "damnation of Gehenna," which Jesus mentioned, Matt. xxiii. 33, he describes to be a "*great tribulation*, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Matt. xxiv. 21. Was it not better to part with friends, and all improper gratifications, and all apparent temporal advantages for the kingdom of Christ, than by losing that kingdom to suffer the judgment of Gehenna? Jesus said, "whosoever will save his life shall lose it." Whosoever, to obtain temporal good, shall hesitate to become my disciple, shall lose the very object at which he aims: while "whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." He who shall expose himself to temporal loss for my kingdom, shall, in reality, be a great gainer thereby. The apostles

entered into life maimed. Peter said, to his master, "Lo, we have left all, and followed thee." Jesus replied, "Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time;" i. e. the period under the law; "and in the world to come," the *age* to come, "life everlasting." This passage is a fair solution of the proposition under consideration. Those who cheerfully parted with all hindrances to entering the kingdom of the gospel, and entered that kingdom without them, enjoyed, in reality, more than others, before the proud neck of the persecuting Jews was broken; but when the judgments fell on that nation, and they were "ground to powder," there cannot be a question that it was far better to be a member of the kingdom of God. The advice of Christ, then, in the parable, was perfectly reasonable. It was better to enter into life maimed, than to be cast into hell fire.



## Parable of the Strait Gate.

MATT. VII. 13, 14.

*"Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because, strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."*

THIS parable has been frequently employed to prove the doctrine of endless misery. The strait and narrow way, it was thought, was the way of truth and righteousness. The broad road was the

road of error and sin. The former led to life, that is, to eternal glory in another state of existence; the latter led to destruction, that is, to endless sin and misery in that state. As *few* found the strait gate, and *many* the broad road, so few will be saved compared with the number of the lost. Dr. Watts paraphrases the passage,

“Broad is the road that leads to death  
And thousands walk together there,  
While wisdom shows a narrow path,  
With here and there a traveller.”

Now that this is manifestly a wrong application of the parable, is evident from the circumstance that Jesus was not in the whole context speaking of the future state. “*Enter ye in at the strait gate.*” Does this necessarily refer to the future state? No. “For strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which *leadeth* unto life, and few there *be* that *find* it.” All these verbs are in the present tense. “Wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that *leadeth* to destruction, and many there *be* which *go* in thereat.” There is nothing here which necessarily applies the passage to the future state. Life and destruction may both be found in this world; it is not necessary that we go into another after them.

Wisdom is *life*. “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of *life* to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her.” Prov. iii. 17, 18. Again it is said, Prov. viii. 35, “whoso findeth *me* findeth *life*.” Again, see Prov. x. 17, which is a very appropriate illustration of the parable before us. “He is in THE WAY OF LIFE that keepeth instruction; but he that refuseth reproof erreth.” Those who kept the instructions of Christ were in the way of life; they had entered the ‘strait gate,’

and were in the 'narrow way'; but those who refused his reproof were in the way of death. Wisdom was the *life* enjoyed on the one hand, and folly was the *death* suffered on the other. In Prov. xii. 28, it is said, "in the way of righteousness is *life*, and in the pathway thereof there is no death." The apostle Paul saith, Rom. viii. 6, "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is *life* and *peace*." Here it is not said that *life* followed spiritual mindedness as a reward; but the spiritual mindedness was *life itself*. The beloved apostle John saith, speaking of Christ, "he that hath the Son *hath life*, John v. 12; and the evangelist, to the same purport remarks, "he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, *hath everlasting life*." John v. 24.

On the other hand, a state of folly and sin is represented as a state of death. "If a man keep my saying," saith Christ, "he shall never see death." John viii. 51. This cannot, of course, mean natural death. See Rom. viii. 6. "To be carnally minded is *death*." Death is not put here as a punishment which succeeds carnal mindedness—the apostle asserts that that very carnal mindedness is *death*. "To be carnally minded is *DEATH*." A state of hatred is represented as a state of death. "He that loveth not his brother *abideth in death*." 1 John iii. 14. And hence the same apostle saith, "we know that we have passed *from death unto life*, because we love the brethren." How true is it then, that "righteousness delivereth from death." Prov. x. 2.

These scriptures develope the great principles on which the figure in the parable before us is founded. Sin and error are every where in the scriptures represented as a state of death; while,

on the other hand, righteousness and truth are called life and peace. Thus in the parable, he who enters the 'wide gate' is sure to find destruction, and he who enters the 'strait gate,' is sure to find life.

Adam Clarke seems to have given the meaning of Jesus, in his Commentary. The verse which immediately precedes the parable is this—"all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them : for this is the law and the prophets." Clarke observes, "enter in through *THIS* strait gate, i. e. *of doing to every one as you would he should do unto you*; for this alone seems to be the strait gate which our Lord alluded to." He who obeys that command, must be possessed of the spirit of wisdom and love, and having entered the 'strait gate,' he enjoys life. "In the way of righteousness is life," and he finds it. He who does not obey that command, has the spirit of death within him : he is carnally minded ; he hateth his brother, and abideth in death. None of these passages however refer to the final state of men in the world to come, on which the conduct of men in this life can have no influence.

"By a gate," says Bishop Pearce, "the Jews understand that which leads or lets men into the sense and knowledge of any doctrine. Hence Maimonides's treatise concerning the law of Moses, is called by a word signifying the gate of Moses." For this reason perhaps Jesus represented the precept we have referred to by a 'gate' ; it contained the sense of all his precepts, and so to speak, *let men* into the very spirit of his gospel. As men judge it difficult to comply with this injunction, so Christ calls it a "strait gate ;" and as but few in

that age complied with the injunction, the opposite gate was said to be wide, and the way broad.

Israel walked in the broad road, and was destroyed; but she found help in the Lord after her destruction. And so will all sinners. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help." Hosea xiii. 9. "He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction." Psalms cvii. 20.



### **Parable of the Good and Corrupt Tree.**

MATT. VII. 17—19.—LUKE VI. 43, 44.

*"Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."*—Matt. vii. 17—19.

THIS parable bears a strong resemblance to that which occurs in Matt. iii. 10, the notes of which the reader will do well to peruse again. In the case before us Jesus was warning his followers against those false prophets, who came to the people in sheep's clothing, but within they were ravening wolves. See verse 15. The name of prophets is given in the scriptures, not only to those who were appointed to foretell future events, but also to those who were employed in delivering religious instruction of any kind, especially if they directed their labors to explain the precepts and doctrines of divine revelation. Jesus foretold, that the false prophets would come in sheep's clothing that is,



they would come in the garb of innocence. Paul seems to refer to such, in Rom. xvi. 18. "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; *and by good words and fair speeches* deceive the hearts of the simple." That they might not trust in these false pretences, Jesus kindly pointed out to them the proper criterion by which they ought to judge of the professions of mankind. "Ye shall know them by their *fruits*." Ver. 16. That is, as truly as you may know the kind of a tree by the fruit which it bears, so may you know the real character of these prophets by their *works*. "Do men gather grapes of thorns? or figs of thistles?" Certainly not. "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit." If these prophets are true teachers and good men, they will teach true doctrines and do good works. "But a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." Ver. 17. On the other hand, if these prophets are false teachers, and bad men, they will teach false doctrines, and do evil works. It is impossible that it should be otherwise, for "a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Ver. 18. See also Luke vi. 45. A terrible judgment awaits these false prophets, as well as all the unbelieving part of the Jewish nation. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire." Ver. 19. The punishments which the house of Israel suffered, are represented under the figure of *fire*, in instances too numerous to be referred to in this place.

**Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builder.**

MATT. VII. 24—27—LUKE VI. 47—49.

*“Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”—Matt. vii. 24—27.*

KENRICK very judiciously remarks concerning this passage, that “the state of things in Judea, as described by travellers into that country, will illustrate the meaning of the comparison which our Lord here uses. The land of Canaan is described as a hilly, and extremely rocky country; but the rocks are frequently covered with a thin coat of earth or sand. The returns of rain in the winter season are not very frequent; but when it does rain, the water pours down with great violence, three or four days and nights together; so as to produce violent torrents in every part of the country. These violent rains in a hilly country must occasion inundations, endangering buildings which happen to be placed within their reach, by washing away the soil from under them, and occasioning their fall. To events of this nature, which must frequently take place in a populous country, where houses were placed in every situation, our Lord here refers. This account shows us how we are to understand building on the sand, or loose

soil, and the wise man's digging down to the rock, before he laid the foundation of his building."<sup>1</sup> The houses in the east being formed frequently of mud, were but ill calculated to resist the effects of the impetuous torrent which descended from the mountains of Palestine. It should be remembered also, that *tornadoes* or *whirlwinds*, followed by lightning, thunder and rains, were very frequent during the winter and cold seasons. Eastern travellers describe the whirlwinds they have observed, as truly terrific. They carry in their vortex, sand, branches, the stubble of the fields, and not unfrequently buildings which have not been well secured at the foundation.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus represented the man who heard his sayings, and did them, by him who built his house upon a rock, which the winds and floods could not carry away. He was *wise*; his morality was founded on just principles, and it had the firmest and the best support. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had placed the foundation of all moral rectitude in the character of God. See Matt. v. 43—48 and vii. 11. Here the universal love of God to the human race is appealed to by Jesus, as the reason why men should love their enemies, bless those who curse them, and pray for such as despitefully use them and persecute them. That men should love such as loved them Jesus showed was not enough; he directed them to be perfect as their Father in heaven was perfect, viz. in loving their enemies. Thus he made the foundation of human rectitude to lie in the divine character. Now those who obeyed Christ's commands were like a man who built his house on a rock; they had a solid

<sup>1</sup> Kenrick's Expos. in loco.

<sup>2</sup> See Horne's Introduction, iii. 31, 65, 378.

foundation for their morality, they had a good reason for what they did ; and in every period of human life this conduct would stand justified. Not so with the man who heard the sayings of Christ and did them not. Merely to hear these sayings, or to profess to believe them, would not suffice in the day of danger. Jesus instructed his followers, that their *conduct* must be right, and he had given them a rule by which they might always know when it was right. "Not every one," said he, "that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; *but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*" Ver. 21. In the "day" of vengeance which came upon the Jews, many said "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name ? and in thy name have cast out devils ? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" He represents himself as replying, "I never knew you ; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Vers. 22, 23. They were carried away by the torrent of divine judgments which were sent on that nation. They were loud in their professions of love to Christ, but they did not obey his injunctions. Of course their foundation was insecure, and the floods swept them away.

## Parable of the Bruised Reed.

MATT. XII. 20.

*“A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.”*

WE shall easily obtain the true application of this metaphor, if we take the context into consideration. Commencing at the 14th verse, we read as follows: “Then the Pharisees went out, and held council against him, how they might destroy him. But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence; and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; and charged them that they should not make it known; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.” In the true spirit of humility, Jesus charged those who were the happy subjects of his miraculous works, that they should not blazon abroad the wonders he performed: he preferred to do his good deeds in retirement, to pour out blessings unostentatiously upon mankind, and enjoy as his reward, not the praise of men, but the approbation of his conscience, and of him “who seeth in secret.” With what satisfaction must every christian reflect on this trait in the character of his Master, when contrasted with the

pride and ostentation of the Pharisees. Although Jesus frequently rebuked them in strong language, it is easily perceived that the rebuke of his example was still more severe.

In order to show the impropriety of calling public attention, in that age, to himself, any farther than it was absolutely unavoidable, the blessed Jesus referred to a portion of the prophecy of Isaiah, in which the prophet had made reference to him. "*He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.*" He was to pass unostentatiously through the world; and as he never boasted of his benevolent deeds, so he charged his disciples to "tell no man;" but to leave *the works* to give testimony of themselves. "If I do not *the works* of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though you believe not me, believe *the works*; that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him." John x. 37, 38.

In the same spirit Jesus declared his intention to seek the most obscure, broken down, and perishing individuals; not to add sorrow to their sorrow, but to restore them. "*A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench.*" The reed that was bruised he would not destroy, but endeavor to restore it; and the flax so nearly extinguished that it emitted nothing but smoke, he would not quench; as the poet beautifully says,

"He will not quench the smoking flax,  
But raise it to a flame,  
The bruised reed he never breaks,  
Nor scorns the meanest name."

The phrase here rendered "smoking flax," Dr. Campbell translates, "*a dimly burning taper.*"<sup>1</sup> Adam Clarke says it means the wick of a lamp in an ex-

<sup>1</sup> Four Gospels

piring state, when the oil has been all burnt away from it, and nothing is left but a mere snuff emitting smoke.<sup>1</sup> "This expression," saith Bishop Pearce, "means that he shall be so gentle, as not to hurt even that which is of itself ready to perish. The Jews used flax as we now do cotton, for candles or in lamps. This, a little before it is quite extinguished, gives more smoke than flame, and therefore this sense seems a proper one."<sup>2</sup> To the same purport is Knatchbull's annotation, who closes by saying, "that to speak to the capacity of the vulgar, it ought to be translated thus : *he will not extinguish, or put out, the dying lamp.* "Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?" Job xiii. 25. Whitby's comment is equally interesting. "Here saith St. Jerome, *Qui peccatori non porrigit manum, et qui non portat onus fratris sui*, he that stretcheth not forth his hand to the sinner, and he that beareth not the burthen of his brother, he breaks the bruised reed; *et qui modicam scintillam fidei contemnit in paroulis*, and he that contemneth the small spark of faith in little ones, quenches the smoking flax."<sup>3</sup> The first of these expressions, "a bruised reed shall he not break," is a figurative way of speaking, denoting that the gentleness of Christ was so great that he would not hurt even that which of itself was ready to perish. The second, "And smoking flax shall he not quench," was intended to signify the same thing in different words, agreeably to the genius of Hebrew poetry.

The whole life of Jesus Christ may be appealed to, as an evidence that the prophecy in regard to him was just. To mourners he was always con-

1 Com. on the place. 2 Com. on the place. 3 Com. on the place.

soling ; to the oppressed he gave deliverance ; to those afflicted with grievous diseases, so that they were just ready to perish, he gave health : and the wicked, the poor abandoned sinner, he did not despise. O my blessed Lord ! how amiable is thy character in my sight. When the malicious Pharisees brought to thee the woman taken in a violation of the law of Moses, thou didst not upbraid ; thou didst kindly say, “neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more.” When the woman who was a sinner, intruded herself upon thee, with a trembling step, in the house of Simon ; when, having heard the common report of thy tenderness to the unfortunate, she came bursting with grief and penitence, and washed thy feet with her tears, thou didst not spurn her from thy presence, but in mercy saidst—“thy sins are forgiven thee.” May we have more of thy disposition, and learn what it is to be “kind to the unthankful and to the evil.”

We find the principal prophecies in regard to Christ, in harmony with what we have now said. “He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.” Psalms cxlvii. 3. When on earth, Jesus quoted and applied the following prophecy of Isaiah to himself : “The spirit of the Lord is upon me ; because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor ; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them *“that are bruised.”* Isaiah lxi. 1, and Luke iv. 18. This passage is a perfect commentary on the parable under consideration.

“Till he send forth judgment unto victory.” By judgment here is to be understood the statutes and institutions of the gospel, as in verse 18. The sense of the clause seems to be, that Christ would



observe the conduct above described, until he had faithfully and immoveably established his gospel among men : or, as Isaiah hath it, xlii. 4, “till he have set judgment in the earth.”



## **Parable of the Unclean Spirit.**

MATT. XII. 43—45.

*“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return unto my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.”*

IN this parable the Saviour referred to the opinion entertained by the Jews, and which they had derived from their association with the heathen nations, that persons were sometimes possessed by demons, or evil spirits; that is to say, that these spirits influenced them so far as to control their actions, and make them subject to extreme pains. There is the clearest evidence that the heathen attributed disorders, especially such as affected the mind, to the influence of evil spirits, who had in reality no existence or power, but were, like the rest of the heathen deities, imaginary beings. It ought to be distinctly understood, that the demons by which men are said, in the New Testament, to be possessed, were a very different order of beings from the Devil, or Satan, commonly so called. It is never said by the sacred writers, that

men were possessed by *the devil*: whether the doctrine of real possessions be true or false, it is not *the devil* by whom men were possessed, but another order of beings called *demons*. Dr. Campbell has labored with great effect to illustrate this fact.<sup>1</sup> *Demons* are always spoken of in reference to possessions; but *the devil* is never so spoken of. It devolves on us, in this place, to show the reason why Jesus spoke of persons as being possessed by demons.

From the earliest ages the heathen supposed invisible spirits to have agency in the affairs of this world. They peopled the skies with the departed spirits of their heroes, to whom they assigned divers ranks, dispositions, and occupations; some they adored with gratitude, and before others they trembled with fear. This was all the work of imagination—it had no reality. They unquestionably believed it real; and when they experienced any extraordinary emotions, they were wont to attribute them to the agency of their *fabled* demons. This absurd notion was embraced by the Jews, as we learn from their historians; and Josephus, who lived nearly in the same age with the apostles, tells us, that demons are the spirits of wicked men, which return to the earth, and possess and torment the living.<sup>2</sup> This was the prevailing opinion in the time of Christ. Persons afflicted with insanity and epilepsy were more particularly judged to be possessed of demons; and the careful reader will

<sup>1</sup> Prelim. Dis. vi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Speaking of a certain plant, he says, “it is only valuable on account of one virtue it hath, that if it be only brought to tho sick persons, it quickly drives away those called *demons*, which are no other than the spirits of the wicked, that enter into men that are alive, and kill them, unless they can obtain some help against them.” Bell Jud. lib. vii. c. vi. sec. 3.

perceive, by examining the supposed cases of possessions recorded in the New Testament, that the symptoms put forth by the subjects of them, are precisely the symptoms shown by persons really afflicted with those diseases.<sup>1</sup> The Saviour, in speaking of persons thus afflicted, used the common language; not, as we suppose, to give countenance to the silly notion of the real existence of *demons*, but in tenderness perhaps to the persons afflicted, and in accommodation to their views of themselves, as well as to the prevailing opinion on the subject. It has been objected to this, that Jesus would thereby have confirmed people in the false supposition, and deceived them by giving countenance to what was unreal. Those should reflect, who think the demoniacs were possessed by the devil, almost omnipotent, in whom they believe, that this opinion is as wide from that which prevailed in the days of Christ, as the opinion we have expressed. The case is made no different, therefore, by adopting the present hypothesis in regard to possession by the devil. Although the Jews really believed the demoniacs were possessed, they did not believe they were possessed by—*diabolos*,—the devil, but by the spirits of the human dead; and so the demoniacs seem to have thought of themselves, as they sometimes took up their residence among the tombs. In the scriptures, the common language on the subject is kept up, and we are left to explain it by what we know of the religious opinions of the Jews and heathen. When Jesus cured people of insanity or epilepsy, he was said to cast out a demon, or demons, if the possessed thought himself to have more than one; and when Jesus transferred the madness, on one

<sup>1</sup> On this subject, see Jahn's Biblical Archaeology.

occasion, to a herd of swine, as the leprosy of Naaman was transfered to Gehazi, the demons were said to enter them, and their end was what might have been expected.

The parable under consideration is founded on the prevailing opinion of *demons*. The unclean spirit was said to leave a man, to walk through dry places, seeking rest and finding none. He concluded to return to the man whom he had left, and he found him in a better condition than when he left him ; or, as it is expressed, he returned to the house whence he came out, and found it empty, swept and garnished. He went and took with him seven spirits worse than himself, and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of the man was of course, worse than the first. Jesus made the application of the parable by saying, "*even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.*"

It was commonly supposed, that if the insanity left a man for a time, but returned, it came with seven fold violence, which is all that is meant by "seven other spirits." We say at the present day, when a fever is expelled, that if the person is not careful, the disease will return, and the relapse is seven times more difficult to cure than the first attack. The same rule holds good, in regard to moral things. Peter says, "for if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning." The occasion of Jesus using the parable before us was this,—he had just cured a man of blindness and dumbness, or, in the common language, had cast out a demon that was both blind and dumb ; and this circumstance suggested to him the figure by

which he represented what, it might reasonably be supposed, would be the last state of the Jews. They were earnestly looking for the coming of the *latter* days, in which they hoped to enjoy all the glory foretold by their prophets. This *latter state* of the nation was a matter of universal and joyful expectation among them ; but alas! by rejecting the true Messiah; and putting him to death, they brought upon themselves in the *end* of the age, a great tribulation, such as had not been from the beginning of the world to that time, and was never afterward to be exceeded. The “last state” of that generation, instead of being, as they expected, better than any former condition they had ever enjoyed, would be worse—no calamities they ever suffered would compare with those about to fall upon them.

This parable may be very easily and naturally applied to many persons now on the earth. In the process of what *they* call conversion, they get rid of one devil, but they often take in seven. We do not feel disposed to deny it is sometimes the case in proselyting men, that they are led to forsake some sins ; but it is a fact that they fall into others of a more enormous character ; as some writer has quaintly said, “they throw off the sins of a man, and take on those of a devil.” There are people who have been made *worse* by being proselyted to orthodoxy, and although they have boasted of casting the devil out, their last state is worse than the first. So it is with *this* wicked generation.

## Parable of the Sower.

MATT. XIII. 3—8.—MARK IV. 3—8.—LUKE VIII. 5—8.

*“Behold a sower went forth to sow ; And, when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way-side, and the fowls came and devoured them up : Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth ; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had not deepness of earth : And, when the sun was up, they were scorched ; and, because they had no root, they withered away : And some fell among thorns ; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them : But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold.”*—Matt. xiii. 3—8.

At the commencement of the 13th chapter of Matthew, we read that “Jesus *sat* by the seaside;” and in consequence of the great multitudes that gathered to hear him, “he went into a ship and *sat*; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.” It was the custom of the Jewish instructors to stand up, as a mark of reverence, when they recited portions of the word of God, but they expounded sitting. Jesus adopted the same practice. Compare Luke iv. 16 with 20. See also Matt. v. 1. xxiii. 2. Jesus drew the parable before us, as he did many others, from the pastoral occupations of the Jews. It may appear unnatural to some, that he should represent the seed which fell into good ground as bringing forth fruit even to a “hundred fold;” but on the rich lands of Palestine, crops as large as this were sometimes obtained. See Gen. xxvi. 12.

The great object of Jesus in uttering the parable of the Sower, was to shew the different ways in

which the truth would be received by different orders of men. The explanation, as given by our Lord himself, will be found in vers. 18—23. The seed was sown in four different ways, and, in the explanation, Jesus showed that there were four different kinds of hearers of the word.

1. There were those who heard the word, *but did not understand it*. Ver. 19. The word preached to them was the seed which fell by the way side, and which the fowls of the air came and devoured. Hence it is said, that when the word is preached to a man who did not *understand it*, then cometh the wicked,<sup>1</sup> and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. It was not difficult for the wicked enemies of Jesus, to take away the word of the gospel, from the hearts of those who did not understand it. Their great object was to prevent men from embracing the religion of the blessed Redeemer. They took away the key of knowledge from the people,—they shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, neither entering themselves, nor suffering those who would enter to go in; and they were represented by the fowls who came and devoured the seed.

2. There were those who heard the word, and received it with joy; but they were men of instability, and endured only for a while; for when tribulation or persecution arose on account of the word they had professed, they became offended and gave it up. This was a class of men to whom the word was preached, which, when preached to them, was represented by the seed which fell upon stony places, where there was but little earth. It sprang quickly up, as seed does when slightly covered, and having but little root, it could not endure

<sup>1</sup> The word *one*, being supplied by the translators, I omit.

the scorching rays of the sun, and, of course, withered away. This certainly was a beautiful figure by which to represent those who, to use the apostle's expression, were not "rooted and grounded" in the faith. Eph. iii. 17 : Col. ii. 7.

3. There were those who heard the word, and who became unfruitful because the care of this *world*, and the deceitfulness of *riches*, choked it, and prevented its growth in their minds. When preached to them, it was represented by the seed sown among thorns, which the thorns sprung up and choked.

4. There were those who heard the word, and *understood it*, in whose hearts it bore fruit, to some in a greater, to others in a less proportion. The word to them was like seed sown in good ground, which "brought forth fruit, some a hundred fold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold."

In drawing moral instruction from this parable, it should be remarked, that we here perceive the way in which *the truth* is received by different classes of men, and the reasons by which some men are induced to renounce and abandon *the truth*. All the seed that was sown, was represented as being good seed. That which was sown by the way side did not germinate, because it was caught away by the fowls ; that which fell in stony places sprang up, and withered only for want of soil ; that which fell among thorns, was good seed, and would have borne fruit, had it not been choked ; while that which fell into good ground was no better seed, but it bore fruit, even to an hundred fold, on account of the soil into which it was received. The word of truth met with all these different kinds of reception ; and it may be remarked, that the truth meets with the same reception now, as the



experience of every true preacher of the gospel will enable him to testify.

In the first place, there are at the present day, the 'way side' hearers—those *who do not understand what they hear*. No lasting impression can be made on such persons. If they profess to have received the truth, they never can defend it; they cannot give a reason of the hope that is in them; and they are continually liable to abandon the cause they may have espoused. The enemies of the truth will find them fit subjects for deception, and they will artfully catch away from their hearts what little of truth they may have in remembrance, as the fowls caught away the seed from the way side.

There are those again who hear the word, and receive it with great joy and zeal at first; but they do not *understand* it; the *root* of the matter is not in them; and they endure only for a while. Opposition causes them to tremble. Not having the love of truth in their hearts, they know not how to suffer any thing in its defence; and "when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word," they are offended, and they abandon the cause which they at first embraced with so great joy. And here it should be remarked, that these people will never acknowledge the real reasons why they profess to renounce the truth; they will not say that it is on account of the opposition with which they meet, and that they are offended because tribulation and persecution ariseth. No, they will say they have ascertained that what they professed to believe, is a dangerous error, ruinous to the souls of men, and they will profess to have renounced it on that account. But Jesus makes manifest the real reason, why such renounce the truth—they have not sufficient magnanimity and courage, and

devotion to truth to endure tribulation and persecution.

In the third place, there are those who hear the word, but in whom the love of the world predominates. "The care of *this world*, and the deceitfulness of *riches* choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." Are there not many such at the present time—men who cannot defend the truth, because it interferes with their worldly interest, and their money making concerns? Such may at first receive the word, but their love of the world, and the power that riches have over them, choke it, and they abandon it. This is no disgrace to the truth itself, and never should weaken our confidence in it. Such men would be as likely to renounce the truth as any thing else, if it interfered with their mere worldly interests. Gain is the only god they worship, and any thing that deprives them of this they cannot endure.

Lastly, we find those in this age of the world, who hear the word, and *understand* it. The word in them is the seed sown in good ground. They understand it well, they know the evidences on which it is founded, they can see the fallacy of the objections brought against it, and they cannot be persuaded to give up the word. The opposers of the truth cannot uproot it from their hearts; they are willing to suffer shame, tribulation and persecution for the name of Christ; and as they love the truth above every thing else, so no worldly consideration can induce them to abandon it. It bears fruit in their hearts, "some a hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty." And it is worthy of remark here, that the fruit which the word brings forth is always like itself. "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles." A

doctrine of love, will bear the fruit of love; a doctrine of joy will bear the fruit of joy; a doctrine of peace, like Christianity, which is *peace* on earth, and good will to men, will bear the fruit of peace; and hence Paul saith, "the *fruit* of the spirit is love, joy, peace," &c. Gal. v. 22. In Peter the word bore the fruit of joy, even an hundred fold, for he saith, that believing he 'rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' 1 Peter i. 8. Reader, may it be your happy lot, to receive and understand the word of God; may you be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ, and may you enjoy those rich consolations of 'the gospel of the blessed God' which the world can neither give nor take away.

## Parable of the Tares of the Field.

MATT. XIII. 24—30.

*“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.”*

THE Saviour, as will be seen by a reference to vers. 37—43 of this chapter, has himself explained the parable now before us; and it will, therefore, be highly proper that we make use of his explanation in coming to a right understanding of it. But as divines and commentators have differed widely in understanding the *explanation* as well as the *parable itself*, it will be our endeavor to elucidate the terms employed by a comparison of them with other instances of their use, in other parts of the Bible.

1. He that sowed the good seed was the Son of man. To whom did Jesus here refer?

2. The field is the world (*kosmos*.) What world is meant?

3. The good seed are the children of the kingdom. Who are the ‘children of the kingdom?’

4. The tares are the children of the wicked one.<sup>1</sup> Who are signified by the children of the wicked one?

5. The enemy that sowed them is the devil. What is here meant by the devil?

6. The harvest is the end of the world (*aion*.) Vers. 39, 40. What world is here meant?

7. The reapers are the angels. What angels are these?

8. Those signified by the tares were to be cast into a "furnace of fire," ver. 42. What was this furnace of fire?

9. The righteous, after the destruction of the wicked, were to shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who were these righteous?

In regard to the first question there will be no dispute, that by the son of man Jesus intended himself. This was one of the common terms by which he made himself known.

The field in which the tares and wheat were both planted, was *the world*. Here the word *world* is a translation of the Greek word *kosmos*, which usually signifies the material universe; and *world*, therefore, is to be understood in its usual sense, in the instance before us.

It next devolves on us to consider who are intended by the "children of the kingdom." It is a fact well known to every Biblical student, that the Hebrews made a peculiar use of the terms *son* and *child*, and adopted them to signify any kind, and almost every kind of relation whatsoever.<sup>2</sup> Hence

<sup>1</sup> The word *one* is here supplied by the translators, and may, of course, be omitted, if we think the sense does not require it.

<sup>2</sup> The following passage from Prof. Stuart's Letters to the Rev. Dr. Miller, is the best illustration we can offer in support of what is here said.

"The word son was a favorite one among the Hebrews and was

'children of the kingdom' may signify either those to whom the kingdom was preached, or those who had actually embraced the gospel, and entered into it. In Matt. viii, 12, we read that "the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness." Here the *unbelieving* Jews are called the 'children of the kingdom,' because the kingdom of Christ was designed first for the Jews, and preached first to them; and hence, when the woman of Canaan came to Jesus, he declared that he was not sent

employed by them to designate a great variety of relations. The son of any thing, according to oriental idiom, may be either what is closely connected with, dependent on it, like it, the consequence of it, worthy of it, &c. But this view of the subject must be explained by actual examples from the Scriptures. The following, I have selected from the Old and New Testaments.

" 'The son of eight days,' i. e. the child that is eight days old ; 'the son of one hundred years,' i. e. the person who is one hundred years of age ; 'the son of a year,' i. e. a yearling ; 'the son of my sorrowing,' i. e. one who has caused me distress ; 'the son of my right hand,' i. e. one who will assist, or be a help to me ; 'son of old age,' i. e. begotten in old age ; 'son of valour,' i. e. bold, brave ; 'son of Belial, [literally, son of good-for-nothing] i. e. a worthless man ; 'son of wickedness,' i. e. wicked ; 'son of a murderer,' i. e. a murderous person ; 'son of my vows,' i. e. son that answers to my vows ; 'son of death,' i. e. one that deserves death ; 'son of perdition,' i. e. one that deserves perdition ; 'son of smiting,' i. e. one that deserves stripes ; 'son of Gehenna,' i. e. one that deserves Gehenna ; 'son of consolation,' i. e. one fitted to administer consolation ; 'son of thunder,' i. e. a man of powerful energetic eloquence or strength ; 'son of peace,' i. e. a peaceable man ; son of the morning,' i. e. the morning star ; 'son of the burning coal,' i. e. sparks of fire , 'son of the bow,' i. e. an arrow , 'son of the threshing floor,' i. e. grain , 'son of oil,' i. e. fat ; 'son of the house,' i. e. a domestic slave ; 'son of man,' i. e. man as it is usually applied, but perhaps in a sense somewhat diverse in several respects as applied to our Saviour. Such is the wide extent of relation, similarity, connexion, &c. which the term 'son' is employed to designate in the Hebrew, and in the idiom of the New Testament, a latitude far greater than is given to it in occidental languages, and which no one who is not conversant with the Hebrew, can scarcely estimate in an adequate manner.

but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and that it was not meet "to take *the children's* bread and cast it to dogs." Matt. xv 24, 26. We know of but one other sense which we can affix to the phrase 'children of the kingdom' in the parable before us—it must signify those who had actually and heartily embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ, and who are said Matt. xxv. 34 'to *inherit* the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.'

The tares represented the children of wickedness, which, as we have shown, simply signifies wicked persons. These were such as had been incorporated into the church, and mixed with the sincere followers of Christ, and we find them referred to under various figures, in several of his parables. At the time the son of man sent forth his angels, they were to gather *out of his kingdom* all things which offend, and them which do iniquity,' which plainly shews that Jesus intended such persons as had professed to know him, but were unfaithful disciples.

Who did Jesus mean by the *devil*, that mixed the children of wickedness with his sincere and faithful followers? The Greek word *diabolos* signified an adversary in general; and was very often applied to human beings, instances of which are frequently occurring in the New Testament. In the instance before us, we suppose it to refer to that perverse and wicked spirit, so opposite to the true spirit of Christ, which led men to say Lord, Lord, while they performed not the will of God, and which induced them to profess to serve a master to whom they were not faithful.

To what time did Jesus refer by "the harvest" which he said should take place at the end of the

(*aion*) world? Ver. 39, 40. By the answer to this question, it is settled whether the event of this parable refer to the future existence of mankind, or whether it had its proper fulfillment at the time of the destruction of the Jewish state. The phrase rendered 'end of the world' is *sunteleia tou aionos*, and signifies literally, *the conclusion of the age*. The same expression occurs Heb. ix. 26, where we read that Jesus appeared, *at the conclusion of the age*, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. As Christianity may be said to have begun when the Jewish religion ended, so Christ is said to have appeared at the end of the Jewish age. The apostle Paul stated, that the end of the age had happened in his day, "Upon whom the *ends of the ages* (*ta tele ton aionon*) are come." 1 Cor. x. 11. The same subject is again spoken of Matt. xxiv. 3, where we are informed, that the disciples asked the Saviour, what should be the sign of his coming, and of the conclusion of the age, (*sunteleias tou aionos*.) He speaks of the end of that age, in verses 6, 13, 14 of the same chapter, and after pointing them to such signs as would infallibly enable them to discern its approach, he adds, ver. 33, 'Verily I say unto you, *this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.*' On the strength of this testimony, plain, clear and incontrovertible, we say that the 'harvest' took place, at the conclusion of the Mosaic age; and we add, that there is not an instance in the New Testament, in which the Greek phrase, rendered, 'end of the world' in the parable on which we are remarking, has any other signification. It never should be forgotten, that the 'end of the world,' vers. 39, 40, at which the harvest was to take place, was not the end of *kosmos*, the world said to be *the field*, but the end of *aion*,



the age, and unquestionably referred to the conclusion of the Jewish state. But that we have assigned 'the harvest' to the proper time, will be made more evident by the next particular to be noticed.<sup>1</sup>

1 To shew that this interpretation of the parable is not peculiar to the denomination of Christians to which the author is well known to belong, the attention of the reader is invited to the following facts :

Dr. Hammond, a most loyal member of the English church, who flourished nearly two centuries ago, translates the phrase *sunteleia tou aionos*, 'conclusion of the age,' and he makes it refer primarily to the then solemn and approaching time of the visitation of the Jews. Paraphrase and Annotations *in loco*.

Adam Clarke, who as every body knows was zealously devoted to the doctrines of the Methodist church, closes his remarks on the parable by saying, "Some learned men are of opinion, that the whole of this parable refers to the Jewish state and people ; and that the words *sunteleia tou aionos*, which are commonly translated *the end of the world*, should be rendered *the end of the age*, viz. the end of the Jewish polity. That the words have this meaning in other places, there can be no doubt ; and this may be their *primary* meaning here ;" but he adds that there are some particulars in the parable which agree better with the consummation of all things, but he does not tell us what those particulars are. Com. *in loco*.

The great commentator Pearce, Bishop of Rochester, translates *sunteleia tou aionos*, "*end of this age*, viz. that of the Jewish dispensation." "This is spoken," he adds, "not of what is to happen at the end of the world, but of what was to happen at the end or destruction of the Jewish state." In a note to ver, 41 he says, "I have explained this and the foregoing verse, as relating not to the end of the world; but to that of the Jewish state, which was to be destroyed within forty years after Jesus's death : for the same manner of expression is made use of, when it is more certain, that not the time of the general judgment, but that of the visitation of the Jews is meant, viz. in Matt. xvi. 27, 28 where it is said, *the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*" This last verse, accomplished in one of the apostles at least (I mean John) plainly shews, that all the phrases used in the first verse were designed to express only the destruction that was to befall the Jewish state : at which time the Christians, who *endured to the end*, were to be saved, Matt. x. 22 and xxiv.

‘The reapers are *the angels*.’ What did Jesus intend by *the angels*? Familiar traditions have confined the application of this word almost exclusively to superhuman beings; but surely the attentive reader of the Bible need not be informed that the term *angel* is precisely synonymous with *messenger*, and that it is applied not only to mankind, but even to inanimate objects. Jesus always represented himself, when coming to destroy the Jewish state, as being attended with *angels*. “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, *with his angels*; \* \* \* verily I say unto you, there be some standing here *which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom*.” Matt. xvi. 27, 28. Mark viii. 38 and ix. 1. Luke ix. 26, 27. Here the coming of Christ, with his *angels*, is confined to that generation. On another occasion Jesus said, “they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory: and he shall send his *angels* with a great sound of a trumpet,” to which he immediately adds, “this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” Matt. xxiv. 30, 31, 34. See also Matt. xxv. 31 and 2 Thess. i. 7. It is a circumstance which confirms our application of the parable, that the Son of man sends forth *his angels* to destroy his enemies, for this language is invariably applied, in the New Testament, to the destruction of Jerusalem, whenever that event is described. In the parable before us the *angels*, or messengers, were to be the agents of destruction to the enemies of Christ; and by comparing this

13. These are also called *the elect* in Matt. 22, 24. And Ecclesiastical history informs us, that by a divine admonition the faithful Christians, retired from Judea before the ruin of it by the Romans, and were preserved. See Matt. iii. 12. xxiv. 22. Luke xxi. 18, 36.

part with what is stated Matt. xxii. 7, we ascertain who the messengers of destruction were. "But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth *his armies*, and *destroyed those murderers*, and burned up their city." Here it is certainly meant that the Roman armies were the messengers which God sent to destroy his rebellious people, the Jews.

We come now to consider another important question, viz. what did Jesus signify by the '*furnace of fire*,' into which the wicked were cast by the angels of destruction, to whom God had given them up? We know it has been the usual opinion, that this furnace of fire is a place of torment in the future world. But are there any who have yet to learn, that this figure was employed by the sacred writers to represent *temporal* destruction? The bondage Israel suffered under Pharaoh was described as *a furnace*. "But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the *iron furnace*, even out of Egypt." Deut. iv. 20. See also 1 Kings viii. 51. Isaiah xlviii. 10. Jer. xi. 4. So the tremendous calamities, the '*great tribulation*' suffered by the Jews at the destruction of their favorite city—compared with which the afflictions suffered in Egypt were less than nothing—are represented by a '*furnace of fire*;' and the application of the figure to the city of Jerusalem is made so directly and indisputably, that the most obtuse sense must perceive it. "The Lord's *fire* is in Zion, and his *FURNACE in Jerusalem*." Isaiah xxxi. 9. A passage still more full, and more pointed, remains to be quoted. "And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of *the furnace*; they are

even the dross of silver. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore, I will gather you *into the midst of Jerusalem*; as they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it, so will I gather you in mine anger, and in my fury, and I will leave you *there*, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the *fire* of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord *have poured out my fury upon you.*"

Ezk. xxii. 17—22. There cannot remain a lingering doubt that the 'furnace of fire' was the city of Jerusalem, into which God gathered the Jewish nation, and there he melted them in the fire of his wrath, and destroyed them by the messengers of his judgments. The plainness of this subject can hardly be said to have a parallel; and yet I dare not hope, that it will bring a blush on the faces of those who have for a long time obstinately persisted, that this furnace of fire is in the future world.

After the destruction of the wicked, the righteous were to shine as the sun *in the kingdom* of their Father—who were these? The answer is obvious—such as were *in the kingdom*—such as had set down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, while others were cast out; of whom it is said in the book of Daniel, that they "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they shall turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." xii. 3. Their persecutors the Jews being destroyed, and persecutions on every hand being abated and softened, they would experience comparative earthly felicity, and have an enlarged enjoyment of gospel peace

and life. Separated from hypocrites, the church would be purer—she would attract, by the whiteness of her robes, the gaze of heathen spectators, and constrain them to cry, ‘behold, how these Christians love one another.’ She would shine as the sun, the more brilliantly, because the clouds of oppression and affliction had just been dispelled. “Who hath ears to hear, let him hear,”



### Parable of the Mustard Seed.

MATT. XIII. 31, 32.—MARK IV. 31, 32.—LUKE XIII. 18, 19.

*“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”—Matt. xiii 31, 32.*

“THE JEWS,” saith Whitby, “give a wonderful account of the growth and increase of the mustard seed, viz. there was a stalk of mustard seed in Sichin, from which sprang out three boughs, of which one was broke off, and covered the tent of a potter, and produced three cabs of mustard; R. Simeon B. Calipha said, a stalk of mustard seed was in my field, into which I was wont to climb, as men do into a fig tree. Buxtorf *in voce Chardal*.” Commentary on Matt. xiii. 31. This great growth is attributed to the luxuriant soil of Judea, and to the warmth of the climate.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following passage is worthy of being introduced here: “In order that we may enter fully into the meaning of this parable of our Lord, it may not be irrelevant to observe, that in eastern coun-

By the kingdom of heaven in this parable, Jesus intended his spiritual dispensation, or moral reign, which he came to establish among men. It was like a grain of mustard seed, because at its commencement it may be said to have been exceedingly small. It contained, however, the principle of growth in itself, and was destined to flourish wonderfully, without the aid of human power. Like the stone cut out of the mountain *without hands*, which became a great mountain and filled the *whole earth*, so this would spread abroad its branches far and wide. The prophet Ezekiel uses a similar figure. "Thus saith the Lord God, I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon a high mountain and eminent: In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they

tries, the mustard plant (or at least a species of the *sinapi*, which the orientals comprehended under that name) attains a greater size than with us. It appears that the orientals were accustomed to give the denomination of *trees*, to plants growing to the height of ten or twelve feet, and having branches in proportion. To such a height the mustard plant grows in Judea; and its branches are so strong, and well covered with leaves, as to afford shelter to the feathered tribe. Such is the image by which Jesus Christ represents the progress of his gospel. The kingdom of heaven, said he, is like to a grain of mustard seed—small and contemptible in its beginning; which is indeed the least of all seeds, that is, of all those seeds with which the Jews were then acquainted: (for our Lord's words are to be interpreted by popular use; and we learn from Matt. xvii. 20, that, *like a grain of mustard seed*, was a proverbial expression to denote a small quantity,) but when it is grown, it becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Under this simple and beautiful figure does Jesus Christ describe the admirable development of his gospel from its origin to its final consummation." Horne's Introduction ii. 616.

dwelt. And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish : I the Lord have spoken and have done it." xvii. 22—24. It was common among the Jews to represent any thing which flourished greatly, under the figure of a tree. Nebuchadnezzar's vast kingdom was shown to him, in a vision, under the like figure ; and the Psalmist said of the righteous man, that " he should be like a tree planted by the rivers of water." i. 3. Jer. xvii. 8. The rest and peace which men would enjoy under the influence of the gospel, is shewn by the " birds of the air lodging in the branches ;" or, to use the more comprehensive expression of Ezekiel, " under it shall dwell *all* fowl of *every* wing, in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell."



## Parable of the Leaven.

MATTHEW XIII. 33.—LUKE XIII. 21.

*"Another parable spake he unto them : The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."*—Matt. xiii. 33.

THE object of this parable is precisely that of the one last noticed—to shew, as Kenrick observes, that although the religion of Christ was small and insignificant in the beginning, it would be diffused throughout the world. "The gospel hath such a secret invisible influence, on the hearts of men, to change and affect them, and all the actions that flow from them, that it is fitly resembled to leaven,

so mixt thoroughly with the whole, that although it appeareth not in any part of it visibly, yet every part, hath a tincture from it.<sup>1</sup>

We are enabled, by the help of this parable, to illustrate a truth, to which we have already referred, viz. that it is the nature of the gospel of Jesus Christ to conform every thing to itself. As leaven operates on meal, and assimilates it to its own nature, so the gospel operates on the hearts of men, and transforms them into a moral likeness to itself. It is for this reason, that it is important, above all things, to preach the truth, in its purity, to mankind. The doctrine of divine love will make men *lovely*—the doctrine of divine mercy will make them *merciful*—the doctrine of divine grace will make them *gracious*—the doctrine of divine benevolence will make them *beneficent*—the doctrine of divine kindness to sinners will make them *kind to sinners*—the doctrine of divine impartiality will make them *impartial*. Contrary doctrines must and will have contrary effects. The doctrine of vengeance will make them *revengeful*—the doctrine of cruelty will make them *cruel*—the doctrine of hatred will fill them with its spirit, and the doctrine of partiality will make them *partial*. Wherever these doctrines have any effect, they have such an effect, as every one must know who has examined their influences upon the world. What doctrine have all the persecutors believed that ever lived in the world? What doctrine has the *holy catholic church* believed—she who has been drunk with the blood of saints, and to whom the groans of burning martyrs have been the most delightful music? The history of that church is a history of usurped power, of blood, and fire and oppression.

<sup>1</sup> Hammond, in Paraphrase and Annotations.



Had her priests believed in the doctrine of divine love for all mankind, is it not reasonable to suppose that the influence of that doctrine on their hearts, like the operation of leaven on meal, would have softened and subdued their angry passions, and awakened the spirit of compassion and love? The persecutions of Protestants, one against another, have been generated by the influence of the same unwholesome doctrines. When Servetus was burned at Geneva, it was not the doctrine of "peace on earth, and *good will to men*," that actuated Calvin, and the rest of his murderers. When Christianity pervades the whole earth, men will learn, like their master, to "have compassion on the ignorant, and those who are out of the way"—they will "not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Another fact confirmed by the parable under consideration, is this, *that all mankind* shall at last know God, and feel the power of his truth. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till *the whole* was leavened." "The reason why three measures of meal are mentioned, is that this was the quantity of meal used at a time for making bread."<sup>1</sup> The apostle says, "a little leaven leaveneth *the whole lump*." 1 Cor. v. 6. Gal. v. 9. Did not Jesus, in the parable, mean to intimate, that the triumphs of his gospel shall be universal? The same great and glorious truth is taught in several passages of scripture. "All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." Psalms xxii. 27. "All nations whom thou

<sup>1</sup> Kenrick's Exposition.

hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name." lxxxvi. 9. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John xii. 32. "In thee shall *all nations* be blessed." Gal. iii. 8. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one *all things in Christ*, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." Eph. i. 10. "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. ii. 10, 11. The passages to this point are too numerous to be all quoted in this place.



## Parable of the Treasure.

MATT. XIII. 44.

*"Again, The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field."*

By the kingdom of heaven, in this passage, we are to understand *the gospel* of Jesus Christ, which he had previously likened to 'a grain of mustard seed,' and to 'leaven.' This kingdom was represented by a treasure hidden in a field, which, when a man had found, he concealed, or did not make it known that he had found it, and for joy went and sold all he had, and bought that field.

The object of this parable appears to have been, to set forth the great value of the gospel, and the

wisdom of parting with all earthly treasures for the sake of obtaining it. The man who purchased the field, is represented as surrendering all he had to obtain it; by which Jesus impressed on his disciples the important fact, that the love of glory, of riches and of pleasure, must be renounced, when brought in competition with the religion he bestowed upon the world. The character which our Lord here draws for the imitation of his followers, is put by way of opposition to that of the man mentioned in ver. 22, in whom 'the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choked the word, and he became unfruitful.'

When Jesus was on earth, the greatest personal sacrifices were necessary in those who would be faithful to him. Such was the opposition he had to meet, and such the bitterness of his enemies, that any man who should profess his name, might reasonably expect to be called on to give up all that the world would call dear. Of this he fairly gave mankind warning. He did not entice them to become his disciples through the hope of earthly gain, and aggrandizement, but forewarned them that they must *forsake all*, and follow him. In doing this they would not really be losers—they would exchange the paltry toys of earth, for heavenly and substantial good. The gospel is the greatest of all riches. It is the *riches* of God's grace, Eph. i. 7, the 'exceeding *riches* of his grace,' ii. 7, 'the unsearchable *riches* of Christ,' iii. 8, and hence the reproach of Christ is said to be greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. Heb. xi. 26 In him, it is said, 'are hid all the *treasures* of wisdom and knowledge.' Col. ii. 3. These were the treasures of the kingdom of heaven; and when people obtained these, they were said to lay up

‘treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal.’ Matt. vi. 20. The propriety of parting with all things to obtain these treasures, Jesus proposed on a certain occasion to the young man, of whom we read in Matt. xix. 21. “Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.” Because it required a willingness in men to part with all earthly possessions for the kingdom of God’s sake, it was hard for a rich man to enter that kingdom. Ver. 23. The apostles forsook all, and followed Christ; and he assured them, that every one who had forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for his name’s sake, should be abundantly the gainer thereby,—he should receive an hundred fold—he should enjoy that everlasting life, which the knowledge of the true God imparts to the mind. Compare Matt. xix. 29 with John xvii. 3.



## **Parable of the Pearl of great Price.**

MATT. XIII. 45, 46.

*“Again, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”*

THE design of this parable is the same with that of the last, viz. to show that the gospel is the greatest of all treasures, and that it was wise in the followers of Christ to surrender all things to obtain it, as the merchant sold all that he had, and purchased the pearl of great price. In the use of

this comparison, Jesus alludes to a well known maxim among the Jews, that true knowledge was better than silver, or gold, or precious stones. 'Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared with her.' Prov. iii. 13—15.

As the observations under the preceding parable, apply with equal force to this, we shall pass to the consideration of another subject, without any further remarks.



## Parable of the Net.

MATT. XIII. 47—50.

*"Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just: And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."*

THE subject intended to be illustrated in the parable before us, is the same which formed the basis of the parable of the tares of the field. The net gathered of every kind, good and bad; and the field contained both tares and wheat. The good were gathered into vessels, but the bad were cast away; and in the harvest, the tares were rooted up from among the wheat. The application of the

two parables is precisely the same. They were both to be fulfilled (*en te sunteleia tou aionos*) in the end of *the age*. Compare vers. 40 and 49. The angels, or messengers, were to separate between the good and bad in both cases; and in both it is said of the enemies of Christ, that they should be cast "into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." In the full explanation, therefore, which we have given of the parable of the tares, we may be said to have explained at length that of the net. It cannot be necessary that we go over again with the arguments and illustrations we have already advanced; the two parables are so plainly referable to the same subject, that if the reader will peruse what we have said on the former, he will be fully able to understand the latter.

It is worthy of remark, in this place, that our Lord was in the habit of drawing his images from present objects and circumstances. When he uttered the parable of the net, he was in a *ship*, upon the *sea* of Galilee, addressing a multitude who stood upon the shore; and this lake abounded with fish, a circumstance that evinces the propriety of the parable being uttered on that occasion, and shews the events that called it up to the Saviour's mind. Several writers have treated on this trait in his discourses, but none perhaps with greater effect than Arch-Bishop Newcome, who has collected the various instances in which our Lord's instructions were suggested by accidental objects, and arose in an easy and natural manner from present or recent occasions and circumstances. He brings the section to a close in which he has recorded various instances of this kind, with language like the following: "By so strongly marking

our Lord's peculiar mode of instructing, and, instead of repeated general lessons on religious and moral topics, introducing so many references to time and place, to occasional occurrences and present objects, the evangelists furnish a presumption that his discourses are not artfully and cautiously invented by them, but are always the substance of what he said, and often his very expressions. And as our Lord's conversations so constantly took this turn, it may be collected that his grand purpose was to be useful and instructive. His excellent lessons were likely to be better retained this way; as every object and event to which he had alluded served for a monitor and remembrancer. It may be added, that this manner of teaching must sometimes have given a peculiar animation to his discourses: that a proud display of knowledge and wisdom is best avoided by pursuing this method: that it proves how full our Lord's mind was of the best thoughts, his mouth speaking out of the abundance of his heart: and that it may teach good men distantly to copy his admirable manner, by making a right use of common incidents on fit occasions."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Newcome's Observations.

## Parable of the Old Garment, &c.

MATT. IX. 16, 17—MARK II. 21, 22.—LUKE V. 36, 37.

*“No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment : for that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles : else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish : but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.”—Matt. ix. 16, 17.*

THE better to understand the design of the Saviour in this parable, it will be necessary to notice the occasion which called it forth. By referring to the 14th verse, we perceive that the disciples of John came to Jesus with this question : “Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not ?” In reply he said, “can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them ? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.” As though he had said, fasting is a sign of sorrow. The children of the bridechamber are not sorrowful while the bridegroom is with them, so neither are my disciples sorrowful while I remain ; but the time will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them—when I shall be cut off,—and then, being sorrowful, they will fast ; not however from a sense of duty, but because those who are sorrowful naturally refuse food. Fasting you regard as a duty under the law of Moses ; but in my kingdom duty is of a higher nature, and consists in love. This is the difference between the two dispensations, the one places importance on rites and ceremonies, the other



makes all duty to consist in love to God and man. Now, "no man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment; for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles; else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish; but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved." As though the Saviour had continued, you wish to unite the two dispensations, and compel my disciples to observe what you regard as the ceremonies of the Mosaic law. It never was designed that these two dispensations should be united. The gospel was not sent as a *patch* for the law, but to make an end of it, and remove it entirely. Neither can they be united; they are so contrary in their natures that the new would destroy the old. As a piece of *new* cloth sewed to an old garment makes the rent worse, and as *new* wine will cause *old* bottles to break and perish, so would your religion be destroyed if mine were incorporated with it. Adam Clarke takes the same view of the design of this parable. "The Institutes of Christ, and those of the Pharisees, could never be brought to accord: an attempt to combine the two systems, would be as absurd as it would be destructive. The old covenant made way for the *new*, which was its completion and its end; but with that old covenant the new cannot be incorporated."<sup>1</sup>

The Scribes and Pharisees on a certain occasion found fault with Jesus, because his disciples transgressed the tradition of the elders, in neglecting to wash their hands when they eat bread. Matt. xv. 1, 2. And so strong was the disposition to mingle the institutes of Moses and the Pharisees with

<sup>1</sup> Commentary on the passage.

those of Christ, that on one occasion, at Antioch, it excited "no small dissension and disputation." Certain men, who had come down from Judea, taught the Christians, that except they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved. It became necessary to send a deputation consisting of Paul, Barnabus and others up to Jerusalem, to settle the matter; and it was decided that circumcision was not binding upon the disciples of Christ. Acts xv.

The force of the parable is easily perceived. A piece of new cloth put into an old garment will surely make the rent worse. The bottles of which the Saviour speaks were not made of glass, as they now generally are, but of skins. Dr. Campbell translates the phrase, "old leathern bottles;" and adds, in a note, "such vessels were commonly then, and in some countries are still of leather, which were not easily distended when old, and were consequently more ready to burst by the fermentation of the liquor."<sup>1</sup> "The modern Arabs, as the Jewish people anciently did, keep their water, milk, wine and other liquors, in bottles made of skins. These bottles, when old, are frequently rent, but are capable of being repaired, by being bound up, or pieced in various ways. Of this description were the *wine bottles of the Gibeonites, old and rent, and bound up*. Josh. ix. 4. As new wine was liable to ferment, and consequently would burst the old skins, all prudent persons would put it into new skins. Bottles of skin, it is well known, are still in use in Spain, where they are called *Borrachas*."<sup>2</sup> The doctrine of Christ was very fitly represented by *new* wine,—the same figure which the prophet Isaiah uses, lv. 1. The effect of min-

<sup>1</sup> Four Gospels.

<sup>2</sup> Horne's Intro. iii. 389.

gling the doctrine and precepts of Christ with the institutions of the Pharisees, would be to destroy those institutions, as the bottles were destroyed by being made the repositories of new wine.

One of the traditions of the Pharisees was, that men should wash their hands, when they eat bread, (Matt. xv. 1, 2) and this, not for purposes of cleanliness, but *as a religious duty*, to render them acceptable to God. On the other hand, Christ laid no stress on mere ceremonies, but made human duty to consist only in works of piety and benevolence. Now these precepts could not be blended; and to allow authority to the precepts of Christ, was to render the others of none effect. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"—this was an ancient tradition, entirely incompatible with the precept of Christ, "resist not evil." Again, it was an ancient tradition, "thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy." The command of Christ was directly opposed thereto. "I say unto you love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Matt. v. 44. Such contradictory laws could not both have influence on the mind; and to set up one, was to overthrow the other. To use the words of the figure, the *new wine* of the gospel would burst the *old bottles* of Pharisaic tradition.

In the present age of the world, we frequently perceive an unwise mixing of truth and error; fact and falsehood; but this always takes place to the disadvantage of error, not of truth. Error, if it stand at all, must stand alone, it can receive no support from truth. Those who believe the doctrine of endless misery, do well to maintain also the doctrine of reprobation to eternal death, by the

absolute and original decree of God, and to say that God reprobated the non-elect because he hated them, and that he made them to hate them, and render them miserable, and for no other purpose. This system would indeed be awful, but it would have the merit of being consistent with itself. Its repugnance to the benevolence of the human heart, has led many to endeavor to incorporate with it the mild doctrine of Jesus. Hence it is declared, that although God will punish some men without mercy and without end, he loves them *all*, and wills the salvation of *all*, and sent his blessed Son to die for *all*. This is putting the *new* wine into the *old* bottle; and the result inevitably will be, that the old bottle will perish; as Paul says of the doctrines of men, "which all are to *perish* with the using." Col. ii. 22. Every person in the exercise of common sense will unquestionably conclude, that if God loves all men, and desires their salvation, and sent his Son to die for all, there is no danger that he will punish any unmercifully and endlessly; and thus the very attempt to *patch* the old doctrine of endless misery, will bring it into disrepute, and at last cause it to be very generally rejected.

**Parable of the Debtors.**

LUKE VII. 41, 42.

*“There was a certain creditor, which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.”*

WE have, in this parable, an instance of the facility with which our Saviour would throw together, at the moment, a train of circumstances in the form of a fable, for the purpose of producing in his proud and watchful opponents the strongest feelings of self-condemnation. To understand the parable, and the object of Jesus in uttering it, we shall find it necessary to take into consideration the principal events that are narrated in the context.

In verse 36 it is said, ‘And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to meat.’ Here it should be remarked first, that the Pharisees were that class of people, who, above all others, most bitterly opposed the Son of God. This Pharisee does not seem to have had any good object in inviting Jesus to his house. He certainly neglected the usual offices of respect in receiving a stranger; and the probability is, that the invitation was given, in the hope that Jesus during the visit would say or do something, that the Pharisee might turn to his disadvantage.

Verses 37 and 38, ‘And, behold, a woman in the city which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet be-

hind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.' This woman was said to be a sinner—probably she was generally known as such. She had heard of the fame of Jesus, and of his tenderness to sinners, and learning that he was at the house of Simon, she obtruded herself upon his presence. She brought an alabaster box of ointment. In eastern countries, where the climate is very hot, perfumes are in frequent use; and it was usual to anoint the heads of such as were thought worthy of distinguished attention, with some kind of perfume. She is said, in the common version, to have stood *at his feet, behind him*, weeping. How was it possible, while Jesus *sat* at the table, that the woman could stand at his feet behind him? Dr. Campbell says, "she must in that case have been under the table. The chairs on which the guests were seated, would have effectually precluded access from behind." The difficulty is removed, if we reflect, that the Jews did not *sit* when they took their meals, but reclined upon couches. by which the table was surrounded, so that their feet extended out from the table on every side. In this position the feet were presented to any person who approached the table from without.<sup>1</sup> The woman began to wash his feet with tears. The Jews wore no stockings, as we do; and before they reclined on their couches at meals, they put off their sandals, which had no upper leather, and were tied about with strings called *latchets*. Frequent washing of the feet was therefore necessary, and as a matter of civility, the feet

<sup>1</sup> This subject is considered at large in Campbell's Prelim. Diss. viii. p. iii. sec. 3—6.

of visitors were washed by the Jews—a civility, however, that the Pharisee had neglected to shew to Jesus. The penitent sinner, who had entered the house, poured upon the feet of Jesus a flood of tears, wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment. These were all expressions of high respect and reverence.

Verse 40. ‘Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him, saw it, he spake within himself, saying, this man, if he were a prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him,—for she is a sinner.’ This was the test with Simon. Holy people, as he supposed, would have no intercourse with the unholy, not so much as to be even touched by them. Jesus did not drive this sinner from his presence with indignation, he permitted her to wash and anoint his feet, and this was sufficient to convince Simon, that he was not a prophet, but a vile impostor. These were his secret musings, and conclusions. Jesus knowing his thoughts said, ver. 40, ‘I have somewhat to say unto thee.’ He rejoined, ‘Master, say on;’ and then Jesus spoke the parable before us. “There was a certain creditor, which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.”

It will now be perceived at once, that Jesus uttered this parable to justify his own conduct in relation to the woman, to produce in Simon the feeling of self-condemnation, and to shew him, that although he thought this woman a very great sinner, and although she actually was a sinner, yet he was the greater sinner of the two. After showing that the creditor fully and frankly forgave both his

debtors, Jesus asks Simon this question : ‘tell me, therefore, which will love him most.’ Ver. 42. The case was so evident, that Simon could not but answer correctly, and just as Jesus intended he should answer—and in a manner too directly calculated to condemn himself—‘I suppose that he to whom he forgave most.’ Ver. 43. To this Jesus says, ‘thou has rightly judged,’ and immediately proceeds to make the application. He contrasts the coldness with which Simon had received him, with the warmth of this woman’s love ; and love and gratitude being the essence of pure religion, he had made Simon acknowledge, in the case of the forgiven debtor, that as the woman had had more sins forgiven, and therefore loved more than he, so he, of course, was the greater sinner of the two. He said unto Simon, ‘seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet.’ Thou didst not receive me with customary civility. ‘But she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss,’ the usual sign of welcome, ‘but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins which are many, are forgiven ; *therefore*<sup>1</sup> she loved much ; but to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little.’ Vers. 44—47. Here the case stood before Simon in such a form as would enable him to understand it. The parable was framed for his benefit, and intended to suit his views of himself. In his own estimation he had sinned little, and he was the debtor who owed

<sup>1</sup> I follow the best commentators in rendering *oti therefore*. See Bp. Pearce, A. Clarke, Kenrick, Campbell, Whitby, Hammond, &c.



*fifty* pence. The woman, as he thought, had sinned much, and she was the debtor who owed *five hundred* pence. To the question, which would love most, when both were freely forgiven? he answered, he to whom *most* was forgiven. This was the case of the woman according to Simon's view of her; and therefore he himself had decided, that she loved more than he. Jesus pointed out to him, that this was really the case; and that the woman's conduct justified the conclusion. Simon answered not a word. He stood self-condemned and self-upbraided before Jesus.

The lesson here taught Simon is a humiliating lesson for every Pharisee, and one that they all ought to learn.

‘Turn Pharisee, thine eyes within,  
Nor longer look abroad for sin.’

People of this class can see sins in others, but they never can see any in themselves; and it is often necessary to present their characters, so that they shall not recognize them as their own, in order to procure from them a correct judgment thereon. When Nathan wished David to pass sentence on himself, he showed him his real character, as though it belonged to some other person; and David said immediately, the man that hath done this shall surely die. Simon decided, by the help of the parable, that the outrageous sinner, as he regarded the woman, had, in fact, more love to God than he, and acknowledged the justice of Jesus in receiving her to his presence, and forgiving her sins. Reader, let us really be on our guard, lest we imbibe the spirit of the Pharisees. If we are really better than others, we shall love them, and pity them, and be grateful to God that he hath made us to differ; and we shall not claim a reward

for this, but feel that the debt lies on us, a debt of gratitude—eternal gratitude, love—eternal love.



## Parable of the Unforgiving Servant.

MATT. XVIII. 23—34.

*“Therefore the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.”*

THE object of this parable was to shew the obligation under which men are laid by the kindness and mercy of God to them, to exercise the spirit of forgiveness towards one another; and also to show

that God will not permit the sin of ingratitude and unforgiveness to go unpunished.

The parable was introduced in the following manner: Jesus had been giving directions to his apostles how they should proceed in the cases of those who trespassed against them. Vers. 15—17. After this instruction had been delivered, Peter came to Jesus, and said, “how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” 21. The reply of Jesus was, “I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven,” i. e. without any limits,—a proverbial expression. And thus the Saviour introduces the parable. The dealings of God with men, in the kingdom of the gospel, are like those of a certain king, who would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him who owed an immense sum—ten thousand talents. But because he could not pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. This part of the parable is founded on an ancient Hebrew custom, of selling a man, and his family, to make payment of his debts. Exod. xxii 3. Lev. xxix. 39, 47. 2 Kings iv. 1. The servant fell down, and entreated his lord to have patience and he would pay him all, whereupon the lord was moved with compassion and forgave him the debt. Here was a lesson which ought not to have been lost upon him. The king granted his request; i. e. for the present he forbore to demand the payment, and put it off to a future time. This was all which the servant desired, vers. 26, 32, and all which is represented as being done, ver. 34. But instead of following the compassionate example of his master, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him

an hundred pence, a trifle to what he owed his lord, and he took him by the throat, and demanded payment. His fellow servant made the same request of him, that he had made of his lord, and which had been granted him; but he refused to grant it, and imprisoned him, till he should pay the debt. This act of injustice and ingratitude was reported to his lord, who called him, and said unto him, "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him." Jailors, in that age, used torture to obtain the confession of crime, or the payment of debts, if the debtor was supposed to have any property concealed; and sometimes, by the cruelty, to induce the relations of the prisoner to pay the debt for him. "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts, forgive not every one his brother their trespasses;" i. e. God will punish you justly, for ingratitude and for a want of forgiveness. Cruelty is a greater sin in those who feel and know that *they* have had much forgiven, and such deserve a severer retribution, than those who are not sensible of the benefits which have been conferred on them. We are not to suppose however, that Jesus meant that the conduct of the divine being towards the unforgiving, was, in all respects, like that of the lord who thrust his servant into prison, and delivered him to the tormentors, i. e. we are not from this to attribute any cruelty to God. For first, nothing is more foreign to his nature; and second, nothing is more foreign to the nature of Christ, the author of the parable;

and third, this would be charging upon God the very conduct which was so highly disapproved in the unforgiving servant. The great sin charged on him was, that he refused to forgive, and treated his debtor with cruelty; and from this to charge the same conduct on God, would be to subvert the very design of the parable, which was to inculcate the virtue of forgiveness.

It is plainly to be perceived, that Jesus intended, by this parable, to make the divine character the great foundation of human rectitude, and to shew men what they ought to do, by refering them to the conduct of the divine being. When he inculcated the duty of benevolence, in his sermon on the mount, he predicated the obligation of men to exercise this spirit towards one another, of the fact that God exercised the same spirit toward all mankind. See Matt. v. 44—48 and Luke vi. 32—36. He exhorted men to love their enemies, to bless such as cursed them, to do good to such as hated them; and to encourage them in such a course of conduct, he pointed to the dealings of God with men. “He maketh his sun to rise on the *evil* and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the *unjust*.” “He is kind unto the *unthankful* and to the *evil*.” And to shew that he made the divine conduct the foundation or criterion of human rectitude, he closed that beautiful moral lesson by saying, “Be ye therefore perfect, *even as your Father in heaven is perfect*.” The object of the parable before us, was to teach that men ought to reflect on the dealings of God with them, and discharge their obligations for his kindness to them, by a tender and compassionate conduct towards their fellow creatures. This parable Jesus carried out, and ended, according to the prevalent habits and cus-

toms ; but not with any design, as we have said, to represent any cruelty in the divine administration, since that would charge on God, the very conduct condemned in the servant. The great truth is made sufficiently plain, that a want of forgiveness in those who are sensible they have been forgiven, is doubly sinful, and shall not escape an adequate punishment.

It is of the first importance, that we notice here, that men should never ascribe any disposition, conduct or attribute to God, which they would regret to see in man. The character of God is the standard of perfection. "*Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.*" Whatever is right in God, is right in his creatures. Whatever is justice in him, is justice in us. Whatever is mercy in him, is mercy in us. Whatever is wrong in us, would be more highly wrong in him, and whatever is unjust in us, would be more highly unjust in him. Hence God enjoins it upon us, to be holy, for *he is holy*. The holiness of God is such a holiness as we need ; and therefore a right state of mind is called a *conformity* and a *reconciliation* to him. How important a lesson is this to those who ascribe to God a disposition and purposes which would disgrace mankind. Cruelty and partiality are the distinguishing characteristics of much of the divinity of the present age ; and we are sorry to say, that the conduct of those who have maintained this divinity, has too often conformed to it. The gospel breathes the spirit of "*peace on earth, and good will to men ;*" and those who have imbibed this gospel, will find it operating on their hearts, to induce them to "*love their enemies,*" and to "*be kind to the unthankful and to the evil.*"

## Parable of the Good Samaritan.

LUKE X. 30—35.

*“A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee.”*

THE occasion which called forth this parable, will be seen in the passage which immediately precedes it. It seems that a certain lawyer came, with no very good motives, to the Saviour, and put this question; ‘Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ In return Jesus said to him, ‘what is written in the law? how readest thou?’ The lawyer replied with a quotation from the law—‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.’ Jesus informed him that he had answered correctly, and added, ‘this do, and thou shalt live.’ It occurred to the lawyer probably, that he might be suspected by Jesus of having violated that part

of the commandment, which required him to love his *neighbor* as he loved himself; and being 'willing to justify himself, he said unto Jesus, and who is my neighbor?' To this question the parable was designed as a reply; and it appears evidently to have been the intention of Jesus, to make this lawyer answer his own question. It should be remarked, that the Jews considered persons of their own nation only to be neighbors to them.<sup>1</sup> They contracted a great aversion to other nations, more particularly to the Samaritans, with whom they would hold no intercourse. The lawyer did not consider himself as having violated the divine command; but he felt fearful that Jesus would give too wide a signification to it, and thereby convict him of disobedience, which was the result he intended to guard against, in proposing the question, 'who is my neighbor?' To this question, we have stated, Jesus intended the lawyer should furnish an answer, and in that design, proposed the parable before us.

'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho,' i. e. a certain Jew went down to Jericho. Dr. Campbell translates the sentence, 'a man of Jerusalem travelling to Jericho.'<sup>2</sup> The whole energy of the parable depends on this circumstance, that the person who received the charitable aid was a Jew, and the person who afforded it a Samaritan.

*"And fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half*

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Lightfoot has cited a striking illustration of this fact from Maimonides. "A Jew sees a Gentile fall into the sea, let him by no means lift him out: for it is written, *'Thou shalt not rise up against the blood of thy neighbor.'* But this is *not* thy neighbor." Works ii. 152.

<sup>2</sup> Note on the place.



*dead.*" The scene of this parable is very judiciously laid. Jesus placed it on the road leading from Jerusalem to Jericho, because the chain of mountains which extended from the mount of Olives near Jerusalem to the plain of Jericho, was always infested with robbers. No place can be imagined more favorable for the attacks of banditti, or better adapted than were its caves for their concealment;<sup>1</sup>

1 In Buckingham's Travels in Palestine, we have the following account of this road :

"The whole of this road from Jerusalem to the Jordan is held to be the most dangerous about Palestine, and, indeed, in this portion of it, the very aspect of the scenery is sufficient, on the one hand, to tempt to robbery and murder, and on the other, to occasion a dream of it to those who pass that way. It was partly to prevent any accident happening to us in this early stage of our journey, and partly, perhaps, to calm our fears on that score, that a messenger had been despatched by our guides to an encampment of their tribe near, desiring them to send an escort to meet us at this place. We were met here accordingly, by a band of about twenty persons on foot, all armed with matchlocks, and presenting the most ferocious and robberlike appearance that could be imagined. The effect of this was heightened by the shouts which they sent forth from hill to hill, and which were re-echoed through all the valleys, while the bold projecting crags of rock, the dark shadows in which every thing lay buried below, the towering height of the cliffs above, and the forbidding desolation which every where reigned around, presented a picture that was quite in harmony throughout all its parts. It made us feel most forcibly, the propriety of its being chosen as the scene of the delightful tale of compassion which we had before so often admired for its doctrine, independently of its local beauty. One must be amid these wild and gloomy solitudes, surrounded by an armed band, and feel the impatience of the traveller who rushes on to catch a new view to every pass and turn ; one must be alarmed at the very tramp of the horses' hoofs rebounding through the caverned rocks, and at the savage shouts of the footmen, scarcely less loud than the echoing thunder produced by the discharge of their pieces in the valleys ; one must witness all this upon the spot, before the full force and beauty of the admirable story of the Good Samaritan can be perceived. Here, pillage, wounds, and death would be accompanied with double terror, from the frightful aspect of every thing around. Here, the unfeeling act of passing by a fellow creature in distress, as the Priest and Levite are said to have done, strikes one

and indeed, on account of the many robberies committed there, it was called, as Jerome says, *the bloody way*. The classes or stations of the priests and Levites were fixed at Jericho as well as at Jerusalem, and 12,000 of them are said to have resided there; a circumstance which accounts very naturally for the priest and Levite happening to pass in that road. It should be remembered, that they were of the same nation with the Jew; but when they saw him in his miserable condition, they passed by and gave him no relief.

At length "a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, (articles with which travellers in the east frequently furnished themselves) and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him." The Samaritans were a people towards whom the Jews cherished an unconquerable hatred; and they, on their part, resented the conduct of the Jews, with great indignation. The evangelists furnish proof of this. On passing through Samaria, Jesus on a certain occasion, asked water of a woman of that country; and she marvelled saying, 'How is that thou, *being a Jew*, askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria, for the Jews *have no dealings with the Samaritans*.' This enmity was carried to such an extent, that the woman was surprised to find a Jew asking of with horror, as an act almost more than inhuman. And here, too, the compassion of the Good Samaritan is doubly virtuous, from the purity of the motive which must have led to it, in a spot where no eyes were fixed on him to draw forth the performance of any duty, and from the bravery which was necessary to admit of a man's exposing himself by such delay, to the risk of a similar fate to that from which he was endeavouring to rescue his fellow creature."

her so small a favor as a draught of water. So, on another occasion, as Jesus was travelling towards Jerusalem, he sent messengers before him, to a Samaritan village, to make ready for him. Because he was going to Jerusalem, the Samaritans would not receive him; and the disciples immediately, in the common spirit of their countrymen, requested permission of Christ to command fire from heaven to consume them, a request for which they received a severe rebuke from their master.

The Samaritan in the parable, when he came to the wounded Jew, forgets all the indignities his countrymen had suffered from that nation, and immediately began to afford him all the relief in his power. Jesus represents him, as parting with all the money he had about his person, to pay the expences at the inn; and leaving his promise, when he separated, that, if there were any further charge, he would see it paid.

Having thus gone through the parable, Jesus proposes this question to the lawyer: 'which now of these three (i. e. the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan) thinkest thou was *neighbor* unto him that fell among the thieves?' What answer did the lawyer return? The very answer that he was obliged to return, although it was against his own practice, and a direct condemnation of the customs of his countrymen. He declared that the Samaritan, who showed mercy on him, was neighbor to him that fell among thieves. And here the design of the parable appears—it was to shew the lawyer that, while he hated other nations, he did not obey the divine law; and that the practice of the Jews in limiting the command to the love of their own countrymen was highly erroneous; that our neighbors are not confined to the country in which we

live, nor to the sect or denomination to which we belong; but any person in distress, and needing our assistance, is our neighbor, and it is our duty to love him, and assist him by the means which God has placed in our hands. We have here another instance, of the success of our Saviour, in producing the strongest feelings of self condemnation, by means of his parables.

The occasion is closed by the Saviour with a beautiful moral—"Go thou and do likewise." Imitate the good Samaritan; let your love, like his, know no bounds; do good to the unfortunate of every name and nation. This is the sense of the divine command, 'thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' Let the emotions of benevolence predominate in our hearts towards all mankind; reckon them as related to us, as being members of the great family to which we belong, and consider ourselves under obligations to render them kindness and compassion whenever occasion demands.

"Go thou and do likewise." Christians of the present age, here is a lesson for you. Have you felt a *peculiar* friendship for those of your own sect? Where will you find any thing in the conduct of your Lord, that will stand as an example for this? Have you possessed the spirit of bitterness and wrath towards persons of other faiths, and other names? Have you calumniated their characters, misrepresented their opinions, and done them other injuries? Remember the conduct of the good Samaritan, and the design which your Lord had in view in framing the parable in which his benevolent character is drawn.

It is worthy of remark, that the parables of our Lord, are all fruitful in moral sentiment, and inculcate, in the strongest manner, the practice of the

virtues. Inimitable as they are in their descriptions, they are to be prized above all, for the moral tendency they must exert on every mind, suitably penetrated with the sentiments they contain. No teacher has ever exhibited a more illustrious triumph of compassion over principles by which it was forcibly counteracted, than we find in the case of the Samaritan.



## Parable of a Man who doated on Riches.

LUKE XII. 16—20.

*“The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, this will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater: and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?”*

THERE will be no difficulty in ascertaining the object of this parable, if we consider the circumstances which called it forth. A person came to Jesus with this request: ‘Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.’ Ver. 13. He declined an interference in business which did not concern him. ‘Who made me a judge, or divider over you?’ (ver. 14) said he. He embraced the opportunity to give this caution: ‘Take heed, and beware of covetousness,’ and immediately adds this reason, ‘for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he

possesseth.' Ver. 15. To illustrate the truth of this observation, was the object of the parable before us.

*'The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully.'* His wealth did not increase from rapine, or extortion, or injustice, nor from denying himself the common comforts of life, nor from laborious exertions ; but in the most innocent way possible, by the bounty of divine Providence, in making his lands fruitful, the produce of which was so great he knew not where to store it. *'And he thought within himself, saying, what shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow (or lay up) my fruits?'* His was the case of a man whose heart was solely set on earthly riches. God had blessed him with great possessions ; and it did not occur to him, that he was thereby laid under obligation to assist the needy ; his whole care was to lay it up for future years. *'And he said, this will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater, and there will I bestow (or lay up) all my fruits and my goods.'* Not one cent for the poor, all is for himself, and the hoarding up of these goods was his sole object. *'And I will say to my soul, (another expression to signify, I will say to myself) Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.'* Here the character which Jesus was drawing is fully developed. This person's sole hope of happiness for the future lay in his riches, and, satisfied to the full with these, he asked no more. Doing good to his fellow men, improving his own mind, cultivating in his heart the Christian virtues, making himself acquainted with the joyful tidings of the gospel, and preparing for the day of adversity, sickness and death by cherishing the hope inspired by that gospel, these were not the objects of his consideration.

To have much goods, to take ease, eat, drink and be merry, were the whole objects of his life, and death came not into his thoughts. But this man was just as insecure as others—a man's life doth not consist in the abundance of the things he possesseth. And hence, it was said to him, '*Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.*' Thou canst not carry thy goods with thee to the grave, '*then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?*' Immediately on concluding the parable Jesus adds, (and herein the true application of the parable is seen) 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward Cod.'

We infer from this parable, the important maxim deduced, from the parable of the 'treasure hid in the field,' viz. that true wisdom and understanding are the greatest of all riches; and that without these, the goods of this world are not worth the having. Hence the greatest of all folly, is for a man to place all his trust in worldly riches, to rely on them entirely for future comfort and support, and make no preparation for the hour of adversity and death. We have a remarkable instance of true wisdom in the case of Solomon, about the time of his elevation to the throne. He had the privilege to make any request he was disposed to. He did not ask for riches, nor for victory over his enemies, nor for long life; but considering his weakness, and the important duties that devolved upon him in the office he filled, he prayed, 'Give, therefore, thy servant an *understanding heart.*' And infinite wisdom vouchsafed to reply, 'because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judg-

ment, behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.' 1 Kings iii. 11—13. Solomon's supreme desire was for true wisdom, and to this was added every other good. He might well say, then, as he did in after life, 'wisdom is the *principal* thing; therefore, get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding.' Prov. iv. 7. He that hath wisdom will enjoy all else that he possesses; and hence the Saviour saith, Matt. vi. 33, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.'

Reader, your chief aim should be to be wise. Seek a knowledge of God, and of your own duty. Do your duty faithfully, and you will have a competent portion of this world's goods. Never let a desire of gain engross your whole heart. Make a prudent use of what God shall give you—be kind to the distressed—remember the uncertainty of life—and set not your heart so much on this world, as to be greatly surprised and disappointed when God shall say, 'this night thy soul shall be required of thee.'



## Parable of the Barren Fig Tree.

LUKE XIII. 6—9.

*“A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground? And he, answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it. And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.”*

WE shall be led to the true application of this parable, by the preceding context. At the first verse of the chapter, we are informed, that some who were present with the Saviour, told him of the Galileans, ‘whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.’ These Galileans had come up to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices; and when assembled for that purpose, Pilate, for their opposition to the Roman government as it is supposed, attacked them with an armed force, and put them to death. So singular a calamity might have induced the people to think they had been guilty of some enormous crime, which God had seen fit to punish in this signal manner; but Jesus cautions them against such a conclusion, by saying, ‘Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish;’ i. e. in a like way, in a similar manner. This cannot be applied to the future state, because it is evident that Jesus intended there would be a similarity between the destruction of the Jews and the

Galileans here spoken of. The Saviour then referred to the case of eighteen men on whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, and inquired, 'think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwell at Jerusalem?' This question he answered in the negative, and added, 'except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' It is a fact which should not be forgotten, that there was a peculiar resemblance between the destruction of the Galileans, and those on whom the tower of Siloam fell, when compared with the destruction of the Jews. The first mentioned, it is thought, were slain for their opposition to the Roman government, for the Galileans had a strong antipathy to the Romans. Now the Jews, at the destruction of their city, perished not only by the assaults of the Roman armies, but they fell in the temple many of them, their blood was mingled with their sacrifices, and they were buried in the ruins of the temple. Josephus declares, that the Jews were first incited to rebellion by those who persuaded them, that paying tribute was a sign of slavery, and this became the seed of their future calamities.<sup>1</sup> When the war broke out, they were attacked not only by the Romans, but they fought one against another, both in the city and temple. That many of the Jews perished as did the Galileans, Josephus also testifies. Under the president Cumanus, twenty five thousand perished *about the temple* at the feast of pass-over;<sup>2</sup> under Florus there was a multifarious slaughter of them fighting *in the temple*, and one Manahem was slain as he worshipped there;<sup>3</sup> that many of the Zealots perished in the temple, and washed the holy ground with their blood,<sup>4</sup> and that the

<sup>1</sup> Antiq. l. xviii. c. 1. l. xx. c. 5. De Bell. Jud. l. ii. c. 1, 12, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Antiq. l. xx. c. 4. <sup>3</sup> De Bell. Jud. l. ii. c. 31.

<sup>4</sup> De Bell. Jud. l. iv. c. 14.

Idumeans coming in to their help, eight thousand five hundred of the party of Ananus the high priest were slain, so that the whole outward temple was washed over with blood;<sup>1</sup> that in that three fold sedition which arose in Jerusalem, betwixt Eleazer keeping the inward temple, John with his associates seizing the outward temple, and Simon the upper city, the temple was every where polluted with slaughters, the weapons flew every where and fell upon the priests, and those who officiated at the altar—many who came from far to worship fell *before their sacrifices*, and sprinkled the altar with their blood, insomuch that the blood of the dead carcasses made a pool in the holy court. At the feast of unleavened bread, Eleazer and his companions, opening a gate for the people that came to worship, and to offer sacrifice, John, taking advantage of that opportunity, sent in with them many of his party, having short swords under their garments, who invaded Eleazer's party, and filled that temple with the blood of the zealots, and of the people;<sup>2</sup> and when Titus fought against the temple, a multitude of dead bodies *lay round the altar*, and the blood ran down the steps of the temple; *and many perished by the ruins of the towers or porches.*<sup>3</sup> We have been thus particular, in order to restore to its true sense an oft perverted passage of scripture. These words—‘except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,’ have been cited frequently, to establish the doctrine of endless terment. It is evident, that Jesus had reference to the destruction of the Galileans, and those on whom the tower of Siloam fell; and says to the Jews, ‘except ye repent, ye shall all *likewise* perish,’ i. e. in the same

<sup>1</sup> De Bell. Jud. l. xvi. c. 17.

<sup>2</sup> De Bell. Jud. l. vi. c. 1.

<sup>3</sup> De Bell. Jud. l. vi. c. 4.

way, or manner ; and we have shown, by the quotations from Josephus, that the Jewish nation did perish in that manner. The words did not refer, and should not be applied, to mankind generally, but to the Jews in particular. The word rendered *likewise* is *hosautos*, and signifies, says Parkhurst, ‘in the same way, or like manner.’<sup>1</sup> Bishop Pearce paraphrases the passage, ‘except ye, the nation of the Jews, repent, your state shall be destroyed.’<sup>2</sup> Hammond is to the same purport—‘If you continue your present wicked practices, raising sedition under pretence of piety as frequently you are apt to do, then as they perished at the day of Pascha at their sacrifice, so shall a multitude of you on that very day, in the temple be slaughtered like sheep, and that for the same cause, a sedition raised in the city.’<sup>3</sup> Adam Clarke says, on the words, ‘ye shall all *likewise* perish’—‘ye shall perish in a like way, in the same manner. This prediction of our Lord was literally fulfilled. When the city was taken by the Romans, multitudes of the priests, &c. who were going on with their sacrifices, were slain, and their blood was mingled with the blood of their victims ; and multitudes were buried under the ruins of the walls, houses and temples.’<sup>4</sup>

Thus we have traced the preceding context. The cases of the Galileans, and those on whom the tower of Siloam fell, had been referred to, and Jesus had told the Jews, that unless they repented, i. e. broke off their sins, and turned to righteousness, they would perish in a like manner with the others ; and as they did not repent, the prediction was

<sup>1</sup> Lex. sub voc.      <sup>2</sup> Com. on passage.

<sup>3</sup> Par. and Annot. on the passage.

<sup>4</sup> Com. on the passage. See also a very valuable note in Whitby's Commentary on this passage, who adduces the authority of Grotius to the same point.

literally fulfilled. Here Jesus introduced the parable of the barren fig tree. The owner came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. He said to the keeper of his vineyard, these three years I have sought fruit on this tree, and find none—cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? He is persuaded to let it alone one year; till it shall be dug about, and nurtured; after which, if it bore fruit, well; if not, it was to be destroyed.

By the fig tree our Lord intended the house of Israel. Isaiah described them under the figure of a vine that brought forth wild grapes, which, in consequence, was to be destroyed. v. 1—7.

The fig tree brought forth no fruit. The Jews were barren in works of righteousness; they were ‘a seed of evil doers.’

The fig tree was preserved after it was worthy only of destruction, and was nourished, but to no effect, it continued barren. Thus the house of Israel had been dealt with. They had long been unfruitful, and were fit for the fate which awaited them. God sent them his Son to preach to them, and to them alone; the apostles were sent to this nation only; and the gospel was faithfully proclaimed to them. No other tree was nurtured, until this fig tree, after all the care bestowed on it, had failed to bear fruit, and had been cut down.

This fig tree was cut down. The axe was laid at the root. See the notes on the parable of the axe. The observations of Adam Clarke on Matt. iii. 10 are worthy of insertion here. “It was customary, with the Jewish prophets, to represent the kingdoms, nations and individuals whose ruin they predicted, under the figure of forests and trees, doomed to be cut down. See Jer. xlvi. 22, 23. Ezk. xxxi. 3, 11, 12. The Jewish nation is the

tree, and the Romans the axe, which, by the just judgment of God, was speedily to cut it down. It has been well observed, that there is an allusion here to a woodman, who, having marked a tree for excision, lays his axe at its root, and strips off his outer garment, that he may wield his blows more powerfully, and that his work may be quickly performed. For about sixty years before the coming of Christ, this axe had been lying at the root of the Jewish tree, Judea having been a province to the Roman Empire, from the time that Pompey took the city of Jerusalem, during the contentions of the two brothers Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, which was about sixty-three years before the coming of Christ. See Josephus Antiq. l. xiv. c. 1—5. But as the country might be still considered as in the hands of the Jews, though subject to the Romans, and God had waited on them now nearly ninety years from the above time, expecting them to bring forth fruit, and none was yet produced, he kept the Romans, as an axe, lying at the root of this tree, who were ready to cut it down the moment God gave them the permission.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Com. on Matt. iii. 10.

## Parable of the Master of the House.

LUKE XIII. 24—29.

*“Strive to enter in at the strait gate : for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us ; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are : Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are ; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.”*

IN this passage the parable and the application are closely blended, so that it is with difficulty we can separate the one from the other. This will not, however, hinder us from obtaining the true application.

It seems that a person came to Jesus with this question : ‘Lord, are there few that be saved ?’ In answer, he replied, ‘strive to enter in at the strait gate,’ &c. It ought in the first place to be settled, what did this person mean, when he inquired, ‘are there few that be *saved*?’ Did he intend to inquire, are there few who will finally be saved from hell torments in the world to come ? We think not. In order to ascertain the proper import of this question, we must seek the true

sense of the word *saved*. It is generally supposed that it signifies deliverance from misery in the future existence, but we are confident that a brief examination, will shew the incorrectness of that supposition. Horne says, 'it is not uncommon, even in the best versions, to find meanings put upon the sacred text, which are totally foreign to the intention of the inspired penmen. If the translators of our common version, had rendered the original of Acts ii. 47 literally, it would have run thus—the Lord added daily to the church, *the saved*; that is, those who were saved from their sins and prejudices.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Whitby says, 'the Christians are styled *the saved*. So 1 Cor. i. 18, to us *the saved*, Christ crucified is the power of God; and when the means of salvation, or that grace of God which brings salvation, was vouchsafed to them, salvation is said to come, Luke xix. 9. Rom. xi. 11, or to be sent to them, Acts xiii. 16. xxviii. 28.'<sup>2</sup> This fact should be kept in remembrance, that this expression—*the saved*—was a common term that the Christians chose by which to designate themselves. They did not mean by it persons who had been translated to an immortal existence, but persons who had been turned from darkness to light, from the power of sin and satan unto God, and who had been translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Thus, when the jailor said to Paul and Silas, 'Sirs, what must I do *to be saved*?' the import was—what must I do to be one of the saved? what must I do to be as you are? And hence they returned the very answer which, in that case, we should have expected, 'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.' Acts xvi. 31. The intention, therefore, of the person who

<sup>1</sup> Introduction ii. 683, 684.

<sup>2</sup> Com. on Acts ii. 47.



asked Jesus the question, 'are there few that be saved?' seems to have been this—are there few that have embraced the religion you teach? Is it to be embraced by many, or confined to a few? He seems to have expected to justify his rejection of the gospel by the example of the many. Jesus replies, 'strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' Entering at the strait gate was embracing the religion of Christ, and was the same thing as being saved. Hence Kenrick very judiciously observes; 'Believing in Christ, is, with propriety, called being saved, because it was attended with temporal deliverance; whereas unbelief produced inevitable destruction, in the calamities which awaited the Jewish nation. Christ, therefore, in his answer to the question, exhorts the person who made it, and others who might hear it, to enter the strait gate, that is, to embrace his religion, which was at that time attended with many difficulties, and which might fitly be compared to entering a strait or narrow passage; and he enforces this exhortation, by assuring them that the time would come, when many would seek an entrance into the kingdom of the Messiah, but would be refused admission.'<sup>1</sup>

The very exhortation, '*strive* to enter in,' shows that there were difficulties to encounter. These difficulties however, were not in the nature of the religion of Christ abstractly considered; but existed in the errors and vices of the times, and the corrupt prejudices of the age, to which his religion was directly opposed. This state of things made the entrance into the gospel difficult, and men had to *strive* to attain it. Had the religion of Jesus been

<sup>1</sup> Expos. on the passage.

the popular religion, embraced and countenanced by the rich and great, men naturally, and from motives of worldly interest would have embraced it; if they had strove at all in that case, it must have been to have kept out. The blessed doctrine of universal grace at the present day, like christianity in the primitive age, is opposed by the proud, the self-righteous, and those *who call themselves* religious; and it hence requires an effort on the part of those who embrace it, to rise above the influences of the world, and sacrifice all minor considerations to the cause of truth. Popular prejudice, in the days of Christ, set, like the current of a river, against the truth; and those who followed him, were obliged to encounter this obstacle, and gain truth under all these disadvantages. For this reason entrance into the gospel was represented by a *strait gate*, to which men had access by striving.

But there is another fact to be noticed. Not every one that did strive was able to enter in. 'Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' This seems to be a hard case, that after endeavoring to enter the gate of the gospel, they should be excluded. For what reason was this? Answer, because they did not strive soon enough. While the enemies of Jesus were comparatively safe, eating, and drinking and making merry, they could not profess the name of Christ before men; but when thick troubles began to gather upon the Jewish church and state, and the divine favor began to be manifested in an unusual manner in favor of the persecuted religion of Jesus, then they turned their eyes to him, and cried Lord, Lord, open the gate of the gospel unto us. To these events the following words of Christ are applicable. 'Whosoever, therefore, shall be

ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, *when he cometh in the glory of his Father*, with the holy angels ;' and Jesus assured them that this should take place, during the natural lives of that generation. Mark viii. 38 compared with ix. 1. To illustrate this fact, the parable now under consideration was spoken. "When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are. Then shall ye begin to say, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you I know you not whence ye are : depart from me all ye workers of iniquity." The purport of this advice is, strive to enter *now* into the acceptance and profession of my gospel ; be not ashamed of me, nor of my doctrine before this sinful generation. If you do not embrace the present opportunity, the time will come when you will regret it. Your nation will soon be overthrown with the most dreadful calamities ; and then not a hair on the heads of my disciples shall be hurt. When that time comes, it will be too late for you to enter the kingdom of God ; the door will be shut ; you will wish you had embraced past opportunities ; but it will be of no avail ; you will put forth pretences and claims to be considered my followers, but you will not have the test of true discipleship. At that critical time, there cannot be this change of character. Christians then will be christians, and enemies must remain enemies—the judgments cannot be averted. 'He that is unjust will then be unjust still ; he that is filthy will be filthy still ; he that is

righteous will be righteous still ; and he that is holy will be holy still.' Rev. xxii. 11.<sup>1</sup> I shall then command you to depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

Vers. 28, 29. 'There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye (the Jews) shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the *kingdom of God*, and you yourselves thrust out. And they (the Gentiles) shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and sit down in the *kingdom of God*. That the kingdom of God signified the spiritual reign of the Messiah, all commentators have conceded ; and this we have shown in the notes on the parable of the offending hand or foot, pp. 12—14. The Jews, when the time of sober reflection came, would see that Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets, did in reality embrace Christ, by faith in the promises made to them, and in this sense, they entered the kingdom of God. These patriarchs, and the prophets, the Jews held in the highest estimation ; and nothing could be a greater grief to them, than to see them in the kingdom of God, and they themselves cast out ; and when that took place, therefore, it is well said, 'there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,' the most demonstrable signs of sorrow ; and this was heightened by the reflection, that they should see the Gentiles, whom they had always despised, enjoying in this kingdom the fellowship of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is the view taken of this subject by Dr. Whitby, whose authority in this case will not be impaired by the suspicion, that he was biased by his

<sup>1</sup> That this passage had its fulfillment at the coming of Christ to destroy the Jewish state, is evident from comparing Rev. xxii. 10, 11 and 12.

creed in the interpretation. "To lie down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, doth not signify to enjoy everlasting happiness in heaven with them, but only to become the sons of Abraham through faith, Gal. iii. 7, and so to be blessed with faithful Abraham, ver. 9, to have the blessing of Abraham coming on them, that they may receive the promise of the spirit, ver. 14 through faith in Christ to be the seed of Abraham and heirs according to the promise, ver. 29, viz: the promise made to Abraham, Gen. xii. 3. renewed to Isaac Gen. xxvi. 4, and confirmed to Jacob Gen. xxviii. 14, and to be, according to Isaac, the children of promise, Gal. iv. 28. This, says Christ, shall be the blessing of the believing Gentiles; they shall be sons of Abraham, and heirs of the promises made to the patriarchs, and mentioned by all the holy prophets of the Old Testament, whereas, the unbelieving Jews, wanting the faith of Abraham, shall be deprived of the blessings promised to his seed; for they who seek to enter, and shall not be able, because the master has shut to his door, Luke xiii. 24, 25, are those Jews who sought for righteousness by the works of the law and not by faith, and therefore found it not, Rom. ix. 31, 32, vi. 7, who entered not into the rest prepared for them, by reason of their unbelief, Heb. iii. 18, 19, iv. 2, 5, 8, from whom the kingdom of God was taken away, Matt. xxi. 43, they are they who shall say to Christ, 'we have eaten and drunk before thee, and thou hast taught in our streets,' Luke xiii. 26, which could be said only by the Jews."<sup>1</sup>

Various figures were employed by the Saviour, to represent the Jews as excluded from the blessings of the Gospel. They were said to be cast into

<sup>1</sup> Com. and Annot. on Matt. viii, 11, 12.

*Gehenna*,—their last state was worse than the first—they were the tares that were bound in bundles and burned—the bad that were cast away when the net was drawn on shore—and those cast into outer darkness at the wedding feast. All these figures were employed to represent them, as left in the darkness of ignorance, and suffering the most grievous punishments, while others entered into the kingdom of God, and had rest. The Bible does, however, teach us, that they shall at last all know God. Paul repeatedly declared this fact. "*All Israel shall be saved*," Rom. xi. 26. "*All shall know me from the least to the greatest*," Heb. viii. 11. The parable under consideration had no reference to the eternal state of the Jews, their condition in immortality; but described the great and leading feature in their history, which occupies so prominent a place in all the parables, their rejection and destruction at the time heaven gave them up, the victims of their own wickedness, and of the wrath of the Roman armies.

## Parable of the Supper.

LUKE XIV. 16—24.

*“A certain man made a great supper, and bade many : And sent his servant at supper time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it : I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them : I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife : and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men who were bidden, shall taste of my supper.”*

This parable may be considered under the following heads :—

1. What is signified by the “great supper?”
2. Who were those bidden to the supper?
3. Who were represented by “the poor, and the maimed, and the halt and the blind,” bidden afterwards to the supper?
4. In what sense was it true that none of those first bidden should taste of the supper?

The parable forms a part of a train of instructions which seem to have been drawn from the Saviour by a circumstance of trivial importance in itself. At the commencement of the chapter we are informed, that Jesus “went into the house of

one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath day." After mixing with the guests, he perceived that some were engaged in seeking out the chief places, that they might hold an honorable station at the repast. He, on another occasion, described the Pharisees as "loving the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues."—Matt. xxiii. 6. This circumstance led him to give the following judicious advice, recorded in verses 8—11 :—"When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him; And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place, and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, "Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." From the Pharisees who were engaged in choosing the chief places, Jesus turned to the man into whose house he had entered, and who had invited the distinguished men, viz: the "lawyers and Pharisees," of whom the company was composed. "When thou makest a dinner or a supper," said he, addressing this man, "call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; And thou shalt be blessed: for they cannot recompence thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."—Verses 12—14. At this one of the guests seems incidentally



to have remarked, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." The observation tended immediately to bring up to the mind of the Saviour the blessed gospel of that very kingdom; so often represented by the Jewish prophets under the figures of bread, and of a feast; and of which the Jews had been invited to partake, both by Christ himself, and by his apostles. This gospel he set forth in the parable before us under the figure of a *great supper*.

Before we proceed to a direct consideration of the parable, it will be proper for us to attend to a certain part of the context, which, in common with many other passages of the sacred writings, has, as we conceive, been grossly misapplied. We refer to the saying of Jesus to those whom he directed to call the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind, when they made a feast, instead of their rich neighbors. To induce them to comply with this advice, he assured them that they should be blessed in so doing; for although the poor could not recompense them, they should be "recompensed at the resurrection of the just." From this it has been supposed, that Jesus meant to teach the doctrine of recompense *in the future state* for the actions of this life. Before we yield implicit credence to such an application of these words, let us inquire what real evidence they afford of the doctrine they are supposed to substantiate. Well then, it is said, "thou shalt be recompensed at the RESURRECTION of the just." And does not this mean, says the inquirer, that they shall be recompensed after the bringing up of the body from the grave, in what is commonly called the future life? We answer, the words prove no such thing. If that notion be correct, it is not proved by these words. All the dependance of

those who take the common view, is placed on the word "*resurrection*." If that word had not been there, no person ever would have thought of the usual application. For instance, suppose it had been said, thou shalt be recompensed at the *deliverance* of the just, would any person, from that circumstance, have inferred the fact of a recompense in the future state? No, surely. It is plain then that the sole stress is laid on the word *resurrection*; and the recompense is referred to the future state because it is said it will be given at the *resurrection* of the just. Now in order to have it certain that the words in question substantiate absolutely the doctrine of recompense in the future state for the conduct of men here on earth, it should be *indisputable* that the Greek word *anastasis* here rendered resurrection, signifies in this instance, the bringing up of the body from the grave, or the quickening of man into life after his natural death. But is it *indisputable* that this is the signification of the word in the instance before us? It is not—it is very far from being indisputable. In substantiating what we here say, we do not mean to furnish the reader with any other than orthodox authority.

The Greek word *anastasis*, generally translated *resurrection*, is derived, according to Parkhurst, from the verb *aniseimi*, which signifies to rise. He gives the word two shades of signification: 1st. "A standing on the feet again, or rising, as opposed to falling." 2d. "A rising or resurrection of the body from the grave." Thus then, according to the author, the word *anastasis* has two meanings, or rather applications. *Rising*, in opposition to *falling*, and *rising*, that is from the dead. Now it is a question of the highest importance, in regard to the passage under consideration, in which of these

senses the word *resurrection* occurs? And as we have shown that this word does not necessarily signify restoration to life after natural death, it is clear that the passage of itself alone, is no proof whatsoever of the doctrine of recompense in the future state of existence. Dr. Campbell, one of the most judicious critics that ever lived, says “the word *anastasis*, or rather the phrase *anastasis ton nekron*, is indeed the common term, by which the resurrection, properly so called, is denominated in the New Testament; yet this is neither the *only*, nor the *primitive* import of the word *anastasis*. It denotes simply being raised from inactivity to action, or from obscurity to eminence, or a return to such a state, after an interruption. The verb *anistemi* has the like latitude of signification; and both words are used in this extent by the writers of the New Testament as well as by the LXX. Agreeably therefore to the original import, *rising* from a seat is properly termed *anastasis*, so is *awaking* out of sleep, or *promotion* from an inferior condition.”<sup>1</sup> Here the Dr. assures us, that the common application of the word *anastasis* is not its *only* sense.<sup>2</sup> In regard to the words, “shalt be recompensed at the *resurrection* of the just,” the argument in favor of recompense in the future state for the actions of this life, is founded upon them precisely as though that were its *only* sense. But the Dr. says, that is so far from being the *only*, it is not the

<sup>1</sup> See note on Matt. xxii : 23.

<sup>2</sup> The same writer says, in Dis. vi : p. ii. Sec. 23—“Another mistake about the import of scriptural terms, is in the sense which has been given to the word “*anastasis*.” They confine it by a use derived merely from modern European tongues to that renovation which we call the reunion of the soul and body, and which is to take place at the last day. I have shown in another place, that this is not always the sense of the term in the New Testament.

*primitive* sense of the word. "It denotes simply being raised from *inactivity* to action, or from *obscurity* to eminence, or a return to such a state after an interruption.

To show that the criticisms of Parkhurst and Campbell are well founded, let us refer to the manner in which the word *anastasis* is employed in the scriptures. It occurs most frequently in application to that renovation which is to take place after natural death. But we sometimes find it in its *primitive* sense, signifying a resurrection from inactivity to action, or from obscurity to eminence. See Lamen. iii. 62. "The lips of those that *rose up* against me, and their device against me all the day." Here the word in the Septuagint which is rendered *rose up*, is the same which occurs in the passage under consideration—"thou shalt be recompensed at the *resurrection* of the just:" they cannot now recompense thee; but thou shalt be recompensed when they are raised from inactivity to action, from obscurity to eminence, or when they return to such a state after interruption. See also Zeph. iii. 8. "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I *rise up* to the prey." Here the instance is precisely the same as in the last quoted passage. Luke ii. 34. These are the words of Simeon concerning Jesus Christ. "Behold, this child is set for the fall and *rising again* of many in Israel." The same word occurs in this passage. And what resurrection is referred to? Not resurrection from death in the literal sense, but a resurrection from a depressed condition. There can be no question of this. And is not this the sense in which Jesus is called "the *resurrection* and the life?" "He that believeth in me," said Jesus, "though he were dead, yet shall he live." He shall be

raised from a state of inactivity to action, from obscurity to eminence, from moral death to moral life.

By the help of these criticisms we arrive, we think, at the true sense of the word before us. Jesus was directing the people when they made feasts, to be careful not to forget the poor; "call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind." He anticipates the objection of the Pharisees, who would say, but if I do this, how shall I be recompensed? He assures them they shall not lose their recompense; for although the poor could not recompense them, yet when these poor were raised from inactivity to action, from obscurity to eminence, or returned to such a state after an interruption, then they should be recompensed. The meaning is plain. What Jesus spoke here is true as a general principle, besides perhaps being peculiarly applicable to the age in which he lived. The followers of Jesus then were poor, they were in a depressed condition. To encourage others to receive and treat them with kindness, he frequently declared that they should not lose their reward. If they gave his disciples a cup of cold water, he would receive it as done unto himself. In Mark ix. 41—48, where Jesus is speaking of the distinction that was to be made between his followers, and his enemies, at the time of his coming to destroy the Jewish state, he says, "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." At this time the Christians were to be *exalted*, raised from a low condition. Jesus bade them, when they saw the signs of the destruction of Jerusalem begin to come to pass, 'then *look up*, and *lift up your heads*, for your *redemption* draweth nigh,' Luke xxi. 28. This was

‘the *resurrection* of the just:’ and, at that time, those who had done them favors were to be recompensed. Unless this is the proper sense we are unable to account for the reply made by one of the guests to Jesus, when he uttered the words. As soon as he had said, ‘thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just,’ this guest remarked—“Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God”—an expression certainly that the Jews did not apply to a future state. At the time of the rescue of the church from her enemies at the coming of Christ, the *kingdom of God was to come with power*, Matt. xvi. 27, 28, Luke ix. 26, 27. This ‘resurrection of the just,’ was to take place, at the coming of Christ, when the kingdom of God came with power; and hence, when Jesus spake of it, it called up to the mind of the guest, that kingdom of God. And that Jesus understood this guest, as speaking of his gospel kingdom, which was to be fully established, is evident, because he immediately proceeded to speak of his gospel under the figure of a supper; and to describe the final rejection of the Jews and the conversion of the Gentiles, all which was accomplished at the time to which we have referred the passage.

But the passage we are examining is true also as embracing a general principle. If we favor the poor and distressed with our kind offices, when they *rise* they will recompense us. And if they are *just*, they will rise. God will crown their exertions with success, and enable them to repay their benefactors for the blessings they had bestowed. By this rational interpretation, we avoid the heathen notion of recompensing men in one state of being for the conduct they do in another. Of all reveries this is the wildest. It is as rational as to suppose

that a field of grain sowed in one quarter of the world shall be reaped in another.

The parable of the Supper is very similar to one which we find in Matt. xxii. 2—10. In the one case the scene is laid at supper, in the other at a wedding. In both cases those that were first bidden refused to attend, and went their way to engage in the secular pursuits of life. In both cases also, after those who were first invited had refused attendance, the servants were sent into the high places to gather together whomsoever they should find. The punishment denounced on those who were first invited and refused, was, in the one case, that they should not taste of the supper; in the other, that they should be destroyed by the armies of the king, who were to “burn up their city.”

1 What is signified by the “great supper?” There will be but little question, we think, that by the *great supper* is represented the gospel. There is no figure of more frequent occurrence in the scriptures than that of food to represent the gospel. Isaiah describes it as “a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the less well refined.” Isaiah xxv : 6. So in the language of earnest entreaty and exhortation, the same prophet says, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money ; come ye, buy and eat : yea come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not ? Harken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” lv : 1, 2. Jesus pursues the same figure when he says, “For the bread of God is he who cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world.” His disciples say to him, “Lord, ever-

more give us this *bread*. And Jesus said unto them, I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE: he that cometh to me shall never thirst." John vi: 33—35. Again says Jesus, "I am that *bread* of life;" 48—"I am the living *bread* which came down from heaven;" 51. When he came to explain the figure, and show what he meant by saying he was the bread of life, and by urging mankind to eat his flesh and drink his blood, he said, "the flesh profiteth nothing;" that is to say, meat literally speaking, profiteth nothing in a moral point of view; I am not to be understood in the literal sense; I am setting forth the virtue of my *doctrine* under these similitudes: "THE WORDS that I speak unto you. they are spirit and they are life:" it is from my *gospel*, after all, that you are to derive the spiritual life of which I have been speaking, ver. 63. From these observations we think it will appear, that it was a custom with the Saviour to represent his gospel under the similitude of food, which was the life of the body, as the words of Christ were the life of the soul. "Under the image of an invitation to a feast," says Kenrick on Matt. xxii. 2, "Christ represents the offer of *the gospel* to the Jews. This contained the choicest blessings God had to bestow, and might be fitly compared to the dainties of a feast upon the most joyful occasion; the marriage of a son."

2. Who were those first bidden to the supper? They were unquestionably the Jews. It was the appointment of heaven, that this nation first of all should be invited to receive the gospel of the Son of God. When the twelve were sent forth to preach the kingdom of heaven, Jesus explicitly directed them to go not into the way of the Gentiles, nor enter into any city of the Samaritans; but "go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."



Matt. x. 5, 6. This is a direct confirmation of the application we have made of the parable before us. The Jews were first bidden to the gospel feast. "I am not sent," said Christ, "but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt. xv. 24. The command to preach the gospel to the other nations Jesus did not give until after his resurrection. Mark xvi. 15. Paul said to his brethren the Jews, on a certain occasion when they bitterly opposed the doctrines he taught, "It was necessary that the word of God should *first* have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Acts xiii. 46, 47. The same eminent apostle, after having addressed his countrymen whom he found in the city of Rome, and perceived that they made light of his instructions, spake plainly to them as follows: "Be it known, therefore, unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." Acts xxviii. 28. That the Jews made light of the invitations of the gospel, is indisputable; and that for the most frivolous reasons and pretences they excused themselves from attending to the instructions of Christ and his apostles, is equally evident. One had bought a piece of ground, another five yoke of oxen, and a third had married a wife—these are their excuses as represented in the parable.

3. Who were represented by "the poor, and the maimed, and the halt and the blind," bidden afterwards to the supper? We answer, the Gentile na-

tions. They were universally regarded as poor, and despicable by the Jews. In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Gentiles are represented by a beggar, full of sores, who fed on the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Luke xvi. 20, 21. The Gentiles, in a moral point of view, were truly poor. They were "without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world." Ephes. ii. 12. It cannot be disputed, that the Gentiles were invited to receive the gospel on its being rejected by the Jews. This fact we have already proved. See Acts xiii. 46, 47. Peter was one of the servants sent out into the streets and highways to invite the Gentiles to the "great supper" of the gospel. He at first was unprepared to go; but by the vision of the vessel let down from heaven, God instructed him to call no man common nor unclean, and taught him that to the Gentiles was granted repentance unto life. He went through all places, inviting the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind, to accept the gospel of Christ. Paul also preached the gospel to the Gentiles. So far as it was possible for one man to do it, he went through "all the world, preaching the gospel to every creature." In the language of the parable, he went into the streets and lanes of cities, and the highways and hedges of the country. At Athens he disputed in the market place daily with them that met him. This work of inviting the Gentiles to embrace the gospel is not yet done. The heralds of the cross are still inviting mankind to receive the bread of everlasting life, to eat that which is good, and to let their souls delight themselves in fatness; and these

means we are assured will continue to be exercised, "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." But,

4. In what sense was it true, that none of those who were first bidden should partake of the supper? We have here arrived at a point of our inquiries, that will be regarded probably with particular interest. Those who believe in endless misery have long used this circumstance under consideration to prove that some of the human race will finally be cast out from the favor of God, and not be permitted to taste the blessings of his love forever and ever. A sentiment so dishonorary to the character of God, and fatal to the hopes and happiness of men, should not be received on slight evidence. Let us examine then, the evidence which the parable before us is supposed to furnish of the truth of that doctrine. Those who were first bidden to the supper, and refused attention to the request, and of whom it is said, "none of those men who were bidden shall taste of my supper," must be lost forever, according to the usual application of the parable. But did Jesus mean to teach any such doctrine? Did he who said, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," mean to teach that those "lost sheep" never would be restored? We think not. Did he mean to teach, that the Jews who were first bidden to the supper of the gospel, must be lost and miserable forever? It does not seem reasonable to us. Indeed, we know that cannot have been his meaning. If we never should succeed in ascertaining positively what was the meaning of the Saviour, we do know *positively* what it was not: he did *not* mean to declare the *endless misery* of the Jewish nation, nor of any part of that nation. Is it reasonable that the dear Saviour who

said, "if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me," John xii. 32—"all that the Father hath given me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;" John vi. 37—Is it reasonable that he meant to be understood as teaching the eternal exclusion of the Jews from his gospel kingdom? Was it not the covenant of God in relation to these very people, "*I will* put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and *I will* be to them a God, and they *shall* be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST?" Jere. xxxi. 33, 34. Heb. viii. 10, 11. To know God is eternal life; John xvii. 3, and if they are all to know him without exception, "from the least to the greatest"—will any be eternally excluded from the blessings of the gospel? If the opinion of the apostle Paul is to be relied on in this case, that question must be answered in the negative. In his epistle to the Romans, this eminent servant of Jesus Christ, pursues a luminous course of argument to prove the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles. Drawing towards the close of that subject he says, "For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. AND SO ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED." Rom. xi. 26. This appears to settle the question. Here it is said in regard to those people who were first invited to the supper, and did not come, and of whom it was declared "none of those men shall taste of my supper"—that they shall "all be saved." We say the question is settled, Jesus did not mean to teach that the Jews would finally be lost.

The sense of the parable before us is, in our opinion, clear. Those who were bidden to the supper and refused, did not taste of it, not one of them—they were cast into outer darkness, where was wailing and gnashing of teeth. Blindness happened to them; they had eyes but they saw not. They were sunk in the darkness of unbelief; but God concluded them in unbelief only that “he might have mercy upon all.” Rom. xi. 32.

Here we see then, that the gospel which Jesus preached by himself and with his apostles, and more particularly the opportunity he furnished men of embracing the gospel when he labored personally on earth, preaching and working miracles in his Father’s name, is compared to the supper. The servants of God first invited the Jews to the feast. They refused, missed the first opportunity and were miserably destroyed—yet they shall eventually be saved, even from the least unto the greatest of them. The servants of God next went into the highways, and invited the poor Gentiles; they no longer confined themselves to Judea, but went through all the world, preaching the gospel. So it was ordained in the order of Providence, the Gentiles were first to be converted and afterward the Jews. Thus Paul saith to the Gentiles, “For as ye (Gentiles) in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these (Jews) also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.” Rom. xi. 30—32.

## Parables of Counting the Cost.

LUKE XIV. 28—30.

*“For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it. Lest haply after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.”*

VERSES 31, 32.

*“Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.”*

WE have often had occasion to notice in this volume, that many of the injunctions and precepts of our Lord, as well as his parables, sprung out of the occasion, and had reference to present objects and circumstances. The parables now before us, are an instance of the truth of this remark, and a proof of the readiness with which he conceived his beautiful images,

After Jesus had spoken the parable of the Supper we are informed, “there went great multitudes with him,” ver. 25, who had probably been attracted by his preaching, and the report of his wonderful works, and who, therefore, manifested some disposition to become his disciples. He said unto them, “if any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple,” ver. 26; “and whosoever doth not bear *his cross*, and come after me, cannot

be my disciple," ver. 27. These were the terms of discipleship in the primitive age ; but they have been grossly misunderstood, by a perversion of the idioms which are found in the passage. Jesus did not intend that a man should actually *hate* his father, mother, wife, children, brethren, sisters, and himself also—this would have been impossible, for the apostle says, "no man ever yet hated his own flesh," Eph. v. 29. 'To hate in this instance signifies merely to love in a less degree ; and hence in a similar passage we read, "he that loveth father or mother *more than me*, and he that loveth son or daughter *more than me* is not worthy of me." Matt. x. 37. When it is said, Rom. ix. 13 "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," the meaning evidently is, I have loved Jacob more than Esau ; and that this is no arbitrary interpretation of the word *hate*, but one agreeable to the Hebrew idiom, is evident from Gen. xxix. 30, 31, where we read, "he loved also Rachel *more than Leah* ; and when the Lord saw that Leah was *hated*," &c. Here it is evident hatred signifies a less degree of love. See also Deut. xxi. 15—17. Something resembling what Jesus here teaches, is said by Philo concerning the duty of the Jewish high priest ; that he was to *estrangle himself from all his relations, and not, out of love to his parents, his children, or brethren, to omit any part of his duty, or act in any thing contrary to it.*<sup>1</sup> Crucifixion was one of the most infamous, as well as cruel punishments, inflicted by the Romans and Jews. Hence the *cross* came to be used metaphorically for all kinds of evils ; to bear the cross therefore, and come after Christ, is to expose ourselves with fortitude to the greatest evils in his cause.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Bp. Pearce on Luke xiv. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Kentick Expos. on the passage.

After having laid down these conditions of discipleship, Jesus proceeds to illustrate the necessity, that those who intended to become his followers, should estimate the pains, privations and dangers to which it would expose them, that they might enter into his kingdom fully aware of these evils, lest they should grow faint and weary, and be at last persuaded to abandon him. For this purpose he spoke the two parables, now before us. The man who professed Christ, with a full apprehension of the opposition it would call down upon him, was like a person, who intending to build a tower, sat down first and counted the cost, whether he had sufficient to finish it; while those who professed him, without a calculation of these circumstances, was like the man who went heedlessly on, and after he had laid the foundation, was not able to finish the tower, and whom others mocked, saying, 'this man began to build, and was not able to finish.' So, to apply the other parable, the man who professed Christ without weighing all the consequences, was like the king who went to war with another king, sitting not down first and consulting whether he was able with ten thousand men to meet him that came against him twenty thousand, who, while the other was yet a great way off, sent an ambassage, and desired conditions of peace.

No one can fail to notice the frankness and honesty of Jesus, in pointing out to those who proposed to become his disciples, the privations, difficulties and dangers with which they must inevitably meet. In this particular he always dealt fairly and openly with mankind. He did not promise them worldly ease, riches or honors, but, on the other hand, pain, poverty, disgrace and death. He plainly fore-



warned them that their lives must be a secondary consideration in his service, and that, under all these disadvantages, their love to the cause of truth must be greater than their love to any thing else on earth. And even, when he saw people, 'great multitudes,' following him, with the intent to become his disciples, he checked them, and pointed out the sacrifices they would be compelled to make; and by the help of two interesting parables, the application of which they saw full well, he showed them, if they professed his name without a full apprehension of the consequences, they would finally abandon him, and become the sport and derision of mankind. Every thing here convinces us that Jesus was not an imposter—that he was not disposed to deceive mankind—that he never excited false hopes and illusive expectations. How many pretended reformers and false prophets have deceived their followers with hopes of gain they never realized, and of happiness they never experienced. But on the other hand, the Saviour told his followers they should not lose their reward for their devotion to the cause of truth. The consolation of truth upon their hearts, and the approbation of their consciences, were a recompense which the world could neither give nor take away. In that unbelieving age, these internal joys were the only rewards they would possess, amid the rage and persecution of their enemies; but, in a short time, their enemies were to be overthrown, and then they should be delivered from persecution, and enjoy peace.

The attentive observer will not fail to remark moreover, that Jesus would not recommend to his followers, what he had neglected himself. Did he tell them to forsake all earthly considerations for

the cause of truth ? He had done the same. Did he tell them to bear their cross and follow him ? He was willing to bear the cross. He surrendered his life, an offering for the benefit of mankind. Did he tell them to make all necessary calculations on the difficulties and dangers to be met ? He had done the same. He knew the power of the enemy, the cost and sacrifices necessary to vanquish him, and with a full understanding of all means of opposition to him, he entered on the work of saving mankind. Before he began 'he sat down and counted the cost.' He never will send the adversary proposals of peace. He will accomplish the work he came to do. This work as every Christian will acknowledge, is the salvation of mankind. He came to seek and to save that which was lost ; and if all mankind were lost, he came to save them all. It is the will of God that all men shall be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, 1 Tim. ii. 4 ; and this will Jesus came to perform. "Lo I come to do thy will, O God." Heb. x. 7. Did Jesus here commence a work which he will not perform ? Has he laid the foundation ? and yet will he not be able to finish it ? If so, he is obnoxious to his own reproofs, and therefore doubly worthy of the derision of mankind. But he *will* perform the work he came to do. "The pleasure of the Lord *shall* prosper in his hand. He *shall* see of the travail of his soul, and *shall* be satisfied." Isaiah liii. 10, 11.

"He *will* accomplish his design,  
And all things in himself combine ;  
No more shall ever they rebel,  
Christ Jesus will do all things well."

## Parable of the Lost Sheep.

LUKE XV. 4—6.

*“What man of you having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.”*

THIS parable, with the two that immediately succeed it, were called forth from the Saviour, by the conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees. In the first verse of this chapter we are informed, that ‘all the publicans and sinners drew near unto Jesus to hear him.’ This class of people felt an uncommon interest in his instructions. He was the friend of publicans and sinners; he ate and drank with them; his doctrine was adapted to their circumstances, and satisfied their wants; hence one of the evangelists has recorded, that ‘the common people heard him gladly.’ Mark xii. 37. The publicans were the collectors of customs, and other taxes, which were exacted of the Jewish nation by the Roman government. Because the Jews generally looked on this exaction as a burden, and a sign of bondage, they had a very bad opinion of these publicans, and associated with their characters every thing that was disagreeable; and it being more than probable that the greater part of them were Gentiles, to whom the Jews had a strong aversion, they regarded them as sinners unworthy of the divine favor. When the publicans and sin-

ners drew near to Jesus to listen to his instructions, as he did not forbid them, "the Scribes and Pharisees murmured saying, this man receiveth sinners and eateth with them;" ver. 2, i. e. he condescends to the utmost familiarity with them. This was one of the principal objections, which they had to bring against Jesus Christ. See Matt. ix. 11. Mark ii. 16. Luke v. 30 and xix. 7. Now it was to answer this objection—to acknowledge the charge which the Pharisees brought against him, and justify his conduct in this particular, as well as to point out the selfrighteousness, and unholy spirit of the Pharisees, that Jesus uttered the three parables recorded in Luke xv.

"*What man of you,*" saith he, addressing himself to the Pharisees, "*having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he find it?*" The argument with the Pharisees was this: you think a sheep is sufficiently valuable, if it go astray, to be looked after by the owner—yes, he will leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he find it. When he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing. And to share this joy with others, he called together his friends and neighbors, saying rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. Now, Pharisees, if a beast is thus valuable, of how much more value is man? And if you would make all this exertion to regain a stray sheep to your fold, how necessary is it that I should labor to bring mankind to the fold of God? This is the work I came into the world to do. And as the good shepherd would follow the lost sheep, and not hesitate to take it on his shoulders to bring it home; so I must not decline to receive sinners and eat

with them. They are the lost sheep whom I came to restore; and I seek them, and receive them, and condescend to associate with them, that I may win them to myself. And as you rejoice when the lost sheep is found, so 'I say unto you that joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.' Here Jesus reproved the Pharisees with great severity. In their worldly mindedness, if they lost a thing of small value, they would use the utmost pains to obtain it again; but they were very careless of the interests of their fellow creatures, who they were willing should remain in darkness and sin, and with whom they could hold no connexion.

When Jesus spoke of just persons, who needed no repentance, he referred to the Pharisees, not indeed to acknowledge that they were really just and holy, and needed no repentance, but to speak of them according to their views of themselves, and avail himself of those views to justify his conduct. That they thought themselves to be holy, is evident from the parable of the Pharisee and publican, wherein the former thanked God that he was not like other men, Luke xviii. 11. If they thought themselves thus holy, as Jesus came to save sinners, there was no need, as they in that case must grant, that he should seek them and associate with them, any more than that they should seek a sheep which was not lost. On another occasion Jesus used a different figure, but not less striking. "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick," which he explains by adding, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." Mark ii. 17. As there was no need that the physician should visit

those who are in health, so there was no need that Jesus should visit the righteous ; and if the Pharisees were *really* righteous, then he had not come to call them to repentance. This was spoken solely in reference to their views of themselves, and not to acknowledge them as possessing true righteousness, in which it is certain they were very deficient. When Jesus said, "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth,<sup>1</sup> more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance," the object was merely to express, how desirable it was that sinners should be converted ; and that such a circumstance was greater cause of joy, than though there had actually been ninety and nine just persons who needed not repentance. As the other parables in the chapter, are precisely of the same strain with this, and spoken for the same objects, we may pass to the consideration of them, without a more particular attention here.

<sup>1</sup> This passage is not very favorable to the doctrine, that the inhabitants of heaven will derive their principal joys from beholding the miseries of the damned.

## Parable of the Lost Piece of Silver.

LUKE XV. 8, 9.

*“Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.”*

THE principle of this parable is precisely the same with that last examined, and the object in stating it was the same, viz. to justify the conduct of Christ in associating with publicans and sinners, and to convince the Pharisees, that if truly they were not in a lost state, there was no need of his seeking them. The solicitude of the woman to find the lost piece of silver, shows the strong interest with which Jesus labored for the salvation of mankind; and as she did not abandon the search until she had found that which was lost, so we learn that he will not be satisfied till all those for whom he died, shall have been benefited by his mission. As this piece of silver belonged to the woman, so all mankind belong to Christ; the Father loved him, and gave all things into his hands, John iii. 35; and as the silver was valuable in itself, which caused the owner to prize it, so are mankind valuable in the sight of their rightful owner. They are his “purchased possession;” and he will finally gather them together in himself. Eph. i. 10, 14. The doctrine of total depravity, by which men have been represented as utterly vile and worthless, is not admissible under this view of the subject. Silver may become tarnished, but the nature of it is

not changed, even when its external appearance is at the worst ; there is always something intrinsically valuable ; and Jesus would hardly have chosen this figure whereby to represent mankind in their lost state, had he entertained the same views which have been taken of human nature, by the perverted vision of his misguided followers. Mankind were precious in his sight ; and “ he is like a refiner’s fire, and a fuller’s soap ; and he shall set as a *refiner* and *purifier* of silver ; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Mal. iii. 2, 3.



**Parable of the Prodigal Son.**

LUKE XV. 11—32.

*“A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.*

*And he was angry, and would not go in; therefore came his father out, and entreated him. And he, answering, said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me; and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."*

THIS is one of the most striking and beautiful parables in the Bible, not only for its simplicity and delicateness in every part, but for its adaptation to the subject which it was designed to illustrate, and for the severity of the reproof which it administered to those who had murmured against Jesus because he associated with publicans and sinners. Some parts of the parable will be better understood, and appear with more force, if we take notice of those customs on which they were founded.

The younger son required of his father the portion of goods that belonged to him, and the father readily bestowed them upon him. Adam Clarke has shown that "it has been an immemorial custom in the East for sons to demand and receive their portion of the inheritance during the father's life time: and the parent, however aware of the dissipated inclinations of the child, could not legally refuse to comply with the application." The design of the law was to protect the child from ill-treatment on the part of the father; but if it could be shown that the child had separated from the paternal mansion without just cause, he was subject to a heavy fine.<sup>1</sup> The young man immediately de-

<sup>1</sup> Com. on the place.

parted unto a far country, and wasted his substance in riotous living. He began to be in want, and went and joined himself to a citizen in that country, who put him to the menial employment of feeding swine. No Jew could see greater degradation than this. Among people of that nation, it was regarded as a great defilement to eat swine's flesh; it must therefore have been deemed more dishonorable and odious to be engaged in the employment of feeding these animals. He would fain have satisfied his hunger with the husks the swine eat. His extreme misery induced him to form the resolution to return to his father's house; and when he came, the joyful parent ordered the best robe to be put upon him, a ring to be put upon his hand, and shoes on his feet. He was received with every demonstration of welcome. The compliment of the ring denoted that the person was received to favor and honor; thus Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's, Gen. xli. 42, and Ahasuerus plucked off his ring and bestowed it on Haman, Esther iii. 10, and afterwards on Mordecai, viii. 2.

The object of this parable was the same with that of the two last, with this addition—Jesus here introduced the character of the Pharisee, and under the figure of the elder son he exhibited it, stripped of all its deception. The circumstance that called forth the three parables in Luke xv. should not be forgotten. When the publicans and sinners drew near to Jesus to listen to his instructions, and he did not forbid them, the Scribes and Pharisees expressed their astonishment in the strongest terms, and *murmured* even that he should receive *sinners* and eat with them. In the parables of the lost sheep, and lost piece of silver, as we have

shown, Jesus illustrated the propriety of his conduct, and convinced the Pharisees that, if they were as righteous as they judged themselves, there was no reason why he should seek their society, as they stood not in need of any assistance from him. In the parable before us, by painting, in a masterly manner, the misery into which sin plunges mankind, he showed them that sinners were objects of pity, not of scorn; and by contrasting the hatred and anger of the elder son with the joy felt by all the rest of the family at the prodigal's return, he developed in the clearest light, the misanthropic disposition of the Pharisees. The parable is carried along with great judgment, until the repentant son has mingled with the family, and musick, feasting and dancing are put in requisition to denote the common joy. At this moment the elder son, who represented the Pharisees, is introduced. He draws nigh to the house, and hears musick and dancing. He calls one of the servants, and inquires what these things mean. The servant, as full of joy unquestionably as any other member of the household, and expecting to communicate the same joy to the inquirer that he felt himself, tells him that *his brother has returned*, and that his father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. Now mark the Pharisee. Is he pleased? Does he rush into the house, and seize his brother's hand, and bathe it in the tears of joy that he finds himself unable to repress? No, far from this—he *is angry, and will not go in*. What is the matter? What excites his anger? Only this—the father hath seen fit to receive the sinner into favor, and he is displeased about it. He thinks sinners ought to be cast off forever, and experience no mercy. Well, his father comes out; let us see

how he manages his case. He says to his father, "lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends ; but as soon as this *thy son* [not my brother] was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf." Here the self-righteousness of the Pharisee appears. In his own estimation he has never done any thing wrong. This is his opinion of himself, but what is the fact ? The fact is he is now openly violating his father's commands, who requires him to love his neighbor as himself. But he *hates* his brother, and is angry because the father, more merciful than himself, has received him into favor. Why did he never think to complain before ? Not a word of fault previously to this had ever fallen from his lips. The fact is, he never saw any reason to complain until *others were treated as well as he*. So long as he enjoyed his father's bounty alone, and the prodigal was far away suffering in sin, he felt contented and happy ; but the moment the father shows the least kindness to any person besides himself, then he is angry, and will not go in. This was the real disposition of the Pharisees. Why did they murmur against Christ ? Because " he *received* sinners, and ate with them," ver. 2. But let us examine this elder son a little more closely. He says his father never gave him a kid that he should make merry with his friends. What ! is this true ? Did not his father divide his goods with the children ? ver. 12 ; and did not the father say, ' son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine ' ? ver. 31. It seems then that Pharisees can utter falsehoods, holy as they think themselves. The father closes the scene by asserting the pro-

priety of his conduct. 'It was *meet* that we should make merry and be glad ; for this thy brother was dead and is alive again ; and was lost, and is found.' If the Pharisees to whom these parables were originally delivered, had any sensibility whatsoever, they must have felt the force of the rebuke which was here so adroitly administered.

The spirit of the Pharisees is the same in every age of the world ; and we are sorry to say, that we perceive much of it among mankind now. If we tell some persons that God will at last receive all his prodigal children to his kingdom, they are exceedingly displeased ; they cannot endure such doctrine. They do not complain, if we say that they themselves are to enjoy God forever ; this they believe ; but nothing will excite their anger more quickly, than to tell them that all mankind at last shall fare as well as they. They sometimes inform us, that they do not wish to go to heaven, if all mankind are to enter there. In that case they will be angry, and will not go in. They will complain, if this doctrine is true, that they have not been treated as well as they ought to have been ; but if they can have the glorious satisfaction of knowing that those whom they hate are cast off forever, they are then satisfied.

The parable before us furnishes many rich doctrinal reflections—it sets forth the conduct of God towards his erring children. Witness first the misery into which sin plunged the prodigal, and contrast it with the happiness of his father's house ; then you will know what sufferings press upon the sinner, when compared with the peace and consolation of the virtuous heart. That doctrine which we sometimes hear, that sinners often are happy in their sins, while the righteous are afflicted and dis-

tressed ; and that it will be necessary to establish retributions in the future world in order to make up for these apparent imperfections of divine Providence in this, will find no countenance in this parable. The sinner is represented as suffering exceedingly *in his sins*, and his sufferings induced his return to his father's house. As many contend that men have lost the image of God by their transgressions, it is proper to inquire whether the prodigal lost the image of his father during his absence ? No, the father saw him a great way off, and knew him, and rushed out to meet him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. The father saw his image in the child—it was not lost. We sometimes hear, that it was necessary for Christ to die, in order to make God compassionate, and open a way whereby he could be just, and forgive sinners. Does Jesus give any countenance to this doctrine, in the parable before us ? What victim bled to create compassion in the father's heart ? None, the father never was destitute of compassion. He loved his son before he went astray, he loved him while he was astray, and, when he saw him a great way off, he had compassion upon him, and demonstrated that compassion by the strongest evidences. It has been declared frequently, that mankind, while in a state of sin, are not the children of God. This notion is certainly contradicted by the parable. The prodigal was *a son* while afar off, and he recollected that he had *a father*, and this recollection induced his return to his father's house. "I will arise, and go to MY FATHER." It was not necessary to threaten him with any greater misery than that which he actually suffered, to create in him the resolution to return. It is not reasonable to suppose he would have returned at all, had he be-

lieved his father was his enemy, and that it would be necessary for his brother to die in order to appease his father's wrath. The *conversion* of this prodigal was not a *change of nature* ; it was merely a change of purpose, and inclinations, and this not by any special agency of God's spirit, but by the influence of the circumstances by which he felt himself controlled. He was made wiser by experience ; this wisdom induced a wiser course of conduct ; and *such* was his conversion. These are some of the reflections which naturally occur in reading the parable.

We cannot fail to remark, that every thing in this parable is calculated to have an excellent influence on morals—every thing encourages virtue, and discountenances vice : and so we may say of our Lord's parables in general. On all occasions, wherever he was, whether speaking in figure, or without, the direct tendency of his instructions was to induce love to God and man—to foster tender emotions, pity, compassion, charity—to beget humility and meekness in the heart—and to discountenance pride, ostentation, hypocrisy, arrogance and hatred. In fine, on such a moral teacher as Jesus, the world will never look again. For his knowledge of the human heart, for his wisdom in difficult circumstances, for the simplicity and true sublimity of his parables ; for his power to expose wickedness before the eyes of those who practised it, for the influence of his instructions, and above all of his life itself, our Lord stands, and ever must stand unrivalled, throughout all the world,



## Parable of the Unjust Steward.

LUKE XVI. 1—8.

*“ And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship: for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him. and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat, And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write four-score. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.”*

This parable is a part of the chain of parables, which extends from the beginning of the *fifteenth* to the end of the *sixteenth* chapter of Luke. These all seem to have been drawn from the Saviour by the objections brought against him by the Pharisees, that he received sinners, and ate with them. The principal design of the parable of the prodigal son, was to shew in how high an estimation the Jews, particularly the Pharisees, regarded themselves; and that from this vain conceit of their own abilities and righteousness, sprung up their hatred of the common people, and of the Gentile nations.

The parable of the unjust steward was designed to correct this opinion, and to shew them, that how much soever they thought of their own wisdom in religious things, they were not in fact so wise about those things, as people of the world generally are about temporal concerns.

A certain man had a steward, and he was accused unto him of wasting his goods. For this reason he was called to render in an account of his stewardship, as he was about to be removed from his office. He had nothing to reply to the charge brought against him, and therefore considered what he should do for himself when he was discarded. "What shall I do," saith he, "for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed." As he was not yet put out of office, he resolved to make use of the power with which he was entrusted to secure a retreat among his master's tenants, when dismissed from his service. "I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they (his master's tenants) may receive me into their houses." The plan he proposed, was to confer some essential advantages on the tenants, that he might thereby lay them under obligations to him, which neither from motives of gratitude or interest, they would desire to violate. The accounts he had kept for his master he had in his possession, and he called on the debtors to bring in their accounts. He said unto the first, "how much owest thou unto my lord?" The debtor replies, "a hundred measures of oil." These tenants it appears were to pay their rents, not in money, but in wheat and oil, and the other products of the lands they hired. The steward directed him to alter his account, or lease perhaps, and say fifty; by which expedient it appeared, that it was originally designed he should pay *fifty* only.

He said to another, "how much owest thou?" He answered, "a hundred measures of wheat." He directed him to take his bill, account, or lease, whichsoever it might be—for the Greek phrase to *gramma* signified any writing whatsoever—and write fourscore. These certainly were no small favors that he showed the tenants, and might well dispose them to receive the steward afterwards into their houses. The parable closes with the observation, that "the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely."

Before we proceed to fix and illustrate the application of the parable, we wish to take notice of what we regard as a wrong interpretation of it, and clear the Saviour of a charge which has rashly been brought against him, of designing to countenance immorality. Some have inferred, that God commended the conduct of the steward in defrauding his master, and recommended mankind to imitate him. But this is altogether an unjustifiable inference. In the first place, the lord who commended the steward was his earthly master, the same spoken of in verses 3 and 5. Second, the idea kept up throughout the parable, is that the steward was actually *unjust*, and he is expressly said to be so, ver. 8. No attempt is made to hide or extenuate his fault. Third, this servant was not commended for his *injustice*, but for his prudence in making arrangements for his maintenance after he was dismissed from his master's employ. He is said to have done wisely, not in the particular of his injustice—such a construction would be truly absurd—but in the circumstance of his foresight, and his calculations in regard to the future. He took the future into consideration, and made preparation for it; and so far he was wise, and was commended; but not for his injustice.

What now, we may inquire, was the object of Jesus in uttering this parable? Ans. to shew the Scribes and Pharisees, whose character he had faithfully drawn in the parable of the prodigal, that although they felt proud of their moral attainments, and were generally regarded as the "children of light," yet in fact they were not so wise and prudent, as men generally are, in the management of their secular concerns. The unjust steward showed more wisdom in the provision he had made for the future, than they ever manifested. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." They are here called the children of light for the same reason they are called the "children of the kingdom," Matt. viii. 12. The Saviour then adds, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." Here he directed those who listened to him, to follow the example of the unjust steward. It would have been better for the steward if he had done his duty faithfully, and retained his stewardship; but when he found he must lose it, he did the next best thing he could. So Jesus proposed to those to whom he was speaking the steward's example. If they were determined not to do what they ought, then let them do the next best thing. If they would not embrace the gospel, then let them "make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," or 'uncertain riches,' as Kenrick renders the expression. Let them avail themselves of the law of Moses, and make a good use of that, which was well represented by 'uncertain riches' when compared with the 'durable riches' of the gospel. And if they would make a wise and prudent use of the 'uncertain riches' of the law, and do as

God and Moses commanded them in that institution, they would be received into *age-lasting tabernacles*; for this is certainly the better rendering of *tas aionious skenas*—they would enjoy to the full all the comfort and shelter, if we may so speak, that the law could afford. This they never yet had done—they had made void the law of God by their traditions—and corrupted the institutions of Moses; and the benefit their law otherwise would have conferred upon them, they had not enjoyed. This was the reason they did not receive the gospel, to which a right improvement of the law would naturally have led them. “He that is faithful in that which is *least*, is faithful also in much.” Ver. 10. They had not been faithful in that which was least. “If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon (uncertain riches) who will commit to your trust the true riches?” Ver. 11. If you have not been faithful in your use of the law, you cannot receive the true and durable riches of the gospel. “If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?” Ver. 12. If you have resembled the unjust steward, who was unfaithful to his master, how can you expect to receive the gospel, which was specially designed for you, and proclaimed to you before any other people upon the face of all the earth? It was their *pride* and *avarice* that prevented them from rendering due obedience to the law of Moses, as well as to the gospel of Jesus Christ; and it was to this the Saviour referred, when he said, “ye cannot serve God and mammon.” These two masters no man can serve, “for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.” Ver. 13. The Pharisees listened to these

things with deep attention, and felt themselves severely rebuked by this reference to their covetous spirit; and the consequence was that they derided Christ, ver. 14. To their hypocrisy, and disposition to justify themselves, Jesus refers in ver. 15, "ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is (sometimes) highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God;" as though he had said, ye deceive men by your pretences, and your external show of godliness; and by these means you gain their esteem; but God looks on the heart; him you cannot deceive; and your pretended righteousness which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. From this Jesus returns immediately to the main theme of his discourse, viz. the rejection of the gospel by the Jews. He labors to shew, that the time had come for men to abandon the law of Moses, and embrace the gospel, or, in other words, enter the kingdom of Jesus Christ. See ver. 16. "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." The Pharisees still maintained their adhesion to the law; but God designed that the law should not continue beyond the days of John, since which time the gospel was preached, and men eagerly embraced it. Not one jot or tittle of this law should fail, ver. 17. It was designed to be fulfilled, and done away; and when the time arrived for its abrogation, it was easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than that it should longer remain. In ver. 18, we come to a striking but short parable, in which Jesus sets forth the sin of those who still adhered to the law. "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery:

and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery." If the Jews had put away the law before the time for its abrogation had arrived, they would have been guilty of a sin, like that of the man who should put away his wife, and marry another; but they committed the same offence by adhering to the law after the days of John, since which time the kingdom of God was preached; for they were like the man who married her that was put away by her husband; they remained attached to a dispensation which God had determined should come to an end, and this too notwithstanding they had been urged to receive the gospel, both by Jesus and his apostles. Their glory however was about to depart. The poor Gentiles, whom they had despised, were to be received into the kingdom of the gospel, and they were to be cast into outer darkness. This great change in their circumstances, as well as the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith of Abraham, are beautifully figured in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, to which the attention of the reader will, in the next place, be directed.

## Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

LUKE XVI. 19—31.

*“ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table : moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom : the rich man also died, and was buried ; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said, father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things ; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed ; so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot : neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, Father, that thou wouldst send him to my father’s house : For I have five brethren : that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, they have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear them. And he said, nay, father Abraham ; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”*

WE propose, in considering this parable, to show,

1st. That allowing the passage to be a *literal account* and not a *parable*, it fails altogether of substan-



tiating either the doctrine of the Calvinist, concerning election and reprobation, or of the Arminian, concerning rewards and punishments in the future state for the conduct of men in this life.

2d. That the literal sense of the parable, differs essentially from the doctrine of those who give it that construction.

3d. That the passage is a PARABLE.

4th. Its true application.

It is believed by Calvinists, that God elected to his favor before the world was created, those who will finally be saved ; and that he reprobated to his eternal ire all the rest of mankind. What evidence does the parable before us furnish in favor of this doctrine ? What do we find in it about election and reprobation ? Are we informed that the rich man was reprobated to God's eternal wrath ? Or that God hated him ? Or that he loved Abraham or Lazarus more ? Are we informed that Lazarus was elected to God's peculiar favor ? We cannot see one word in favor of the notion, either of election or reprobation. How then does the parable afford this doctrine any proof ? How can it prove that to which it does not contain even a reference ?

The other doctrine of which we spoke is, that mankind will be recompensed in the future state for the vices and virtues of this world. Understanding the parable *literally*, what evidence does it furnish in favor of this doctrine ? We read that the rich man was in torments in *hades* ; but not because he had been wicked : and we read that the beggar was happy ; but not because he had been good. We see no evidence in the parable, that the rich man was a very bad man, or that the beggar was better than he. We are not informed that the former obtained his riches improperly, or that the

beggar did not become poor by his own negligence or imprudence. It has been alleged against the rich man, that he refused Lazarus the crumbs which fell from his table. If this be a fact, why did Lazarus lay at his gate? We should judge by the account, that some persons, through compassion, perhaps the friends of the beggar, carried him to the rich man's gate, and laid him there. Would they have done this, had they known the rich man to be covetous? Of all places the rich man's gate was selected, as the most proper for the poor man to lay at. Besides, the word translated *desiring* in the account, is sometimes rendered *delighting*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The word here rendered *desiring* is *epithumon*. Of this word Parkhurst says, that, written with an infinitive following, it signifies "*to be content, or glad, to esteem it a great matter;*" and he adduces the instance in the parable before us, of its occurring in this sense. To which he adds, "thus Elsner on Luke xvi. 21, explains it, and observes not only that the LXX. have so applied it, Isa. lviii. 2, but that Lysias has used it in a like sense. Orat. 24." Lex. sub voc. Dr. Campbell says, "I agree with those who do not think there is any foundation, in this expression, for saying that he was refused the crumbs. When the historian says, that he was laid at the rich man's gate, he means not, surely, that he was once there, but that he was usually so placed, which would not probably have happened, if he had got nothing at all. The other circumstances concur in heightening the probability. Such are, the rich man's immediately knowing him, his asking that he might be made the instrument of the relief he wanted; and, let me add this, that though the Patriarch upbraids the rich man with the carelessness and luxury in which he had lived, he says not a word of inhumanity; yet, if we consider Lazarus as having experienced it so recently, it could hardly, on this occasion, have failed to be taken notice of. Can we suppose that Abraham, in the charge he brought against him, would have mentioned only the things of least moment, and omitted those of the greatest?" "Much injury has been done to our Saviour's instructions by the illjudged endeavors of some expositors to improve and strengthen them. I know no better example for illustrating this remark, than the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Many, dissatisfied with its simplicity, as related by the evangelist, and desirous, one would think, to vindicate the character of the judge from the

And if we read that the beggar *delighted* to be fed with the crumbs, is not this a proof that he was not denied them? How then will the parable prove that men will be punished in the future state, because they are sinful in this world? We repeat, we see no evidence that the rich man was a bad man. The prayer which he offered to Abraham is the manifestation of a good spirit. How much better could Lazarus or Abraham have prayed, had either been in the rich man's situation? The rich man prayed that his five brethren might be warned, and prevented from coming to that place of torment. Abraham seems at one time to be accounting for the rich man's torment: but he says nothing about any previous wickedness in him. "Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst

charge of excessive severity in the condemnation of the former, load that wretched man with all the crimes which blacken human nature, and for which they have *no authority* from the words of inspiration. They will have him to have been a glutton and a drunkard, rapacious and unjust, cruel and hardhearted, one who spent in intemperance what he had acquired by extortion and fraud. Now, I must be allowed to remark, that, by so doing, they totally pervert the design of this most instructive lesson," &c. Thus far Dr. Campbell. See his whole note on Luke xvi. 21. Adam Clarke's note is to the same purport, as follows; "It is likely his desire was complied with, for it is not intimated that he spurned away the poor man from the gate, or that his suit was rejected. And as we find, ver. 24, that the rich man desired that Lazarus should be sent with a little water to him, it is a strong intimation that he considered him under some kind of obligation to him: for had he refused him a few crumbs in his time, it is not reasonable to suppose, that he would now have requested such a favor from him; nor does Abraham glance at any such uncharitable conduct on the part of the rich man." Comment. on Luke xvi. 21. Bp. Pearce says, the desire of Lazarus was probably complied with, and adds, "we may presume that there is a consistency in the several parts of this parable; and, if so, then we may conclude, that Lazarus had not been refused relief at the rich man's door; otherwise the rich man would have asked for any other, rather than Lazarus, to be sent to him." Com. on Luke xvi. 24.

thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things : but now he is comforted and thou art tormented ” He did not say, remember thou in thy lifetime wast wicked, but Lazarus good.

Another inquiry properly arising in this place is, does not the literal sense of the passage pointedly disagree with the notions of those who contend that it is not a *parable*? We often hear that such as go to hell never have one holy feeling ; no desire for the company of the blessed ; that they spend their time in blaspheming God. Was it so with the rich man ? Do we read of his blaspheming God ? No ; but we read of his offering up a prayer, and a good one too. “ I *pray* thee therefore, father,” said he, “ that thou wouldst send him (Lazarus) to my father’s house : for I have five brethren ; and that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.” Did he not in this language breathe forth a good desire ? Did he not have a holy feeling ? Again. Abraham, when speaking of the great gulf, said it was fixed “ so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot : neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.” Here two things should be noticed. 1. There were some with Abraham that would go to the rich man ; but could not. And, 2. There were some with the rich man who would go to Abraham ; but could not. It appears from this, that there were some in hell who had a desire for the company of the blessed, and would have gone to them, had it been in their power. And we learn, furthermore, that hell cannot be so hot a place as it has been represented. For if it were so, the rich man, we should think, would have called for more water than Lazarus could have carried on the tip of his finger. And suppose the common idea of

a devil be correct, how would he be pleased to have so benevolent a prayer as that of the rich man, offered up in his dark dominions? The *literal* sense of the text comes in direct contact with many people's notions of a future world.

Now let us turn to Abraham and those with him. It is commonly supposed, that those who are in heaven are happy, and perfectly reconciled to the will of God. We have already shown that there were some in the place of happiness who would go to the rich man; but could not. They were not, therefore, perfectly happy, inasmuch as they were desirous of doing that which they were not permitted to do. Neither were they reconciled to the will of God; for it was the will of God that they should not go, and he had made the great gulf to prevent them. Wishing to do what was not permitted to be done, they were unhappy, and being unreconciled to God, they were wicked. If wicked, they must have been miserable. So we have one argument to prove that those who were with Abraham were wicked, and two that they were miserable. How will these things agree with the opinions of those who contend that the parable is a literal relation of facts? Those who were in heaven were unreconciled to God, and those who were in hell were unreconciled to the supposed devil. How can the passage be explained *literally*?

But it may be said, those in heaven were benevolent, sympathetic, and were urged by good motives to endeavor to relieve the distressed. Permit us to ask, how could they be ignorant of God's determination to punish the wicked eternally? And will it be said, they were better than God? Was not he as good, sympathetic and benevolent as they? Let those who interpret the passage literally con-

sider these things. Let them tell us why those in heaven wished to go down to hell. Was it to abide there? Was it to relieve some friend, some relation? Would some parent comfort his child? Some child, its parent? Some brother, a sister? Some husband, a wife? No, answer the orthodox, the saints say Amen, alleluia, when they see the smoke of the torment of the wicked ascend. How will those who do not allow that the passage is a parable, surmount these difficulties?

Now allowing the passage to be a literal relation, what will it prove? It will *not prove the doctrine of election and reprobation; it will not prove that men are to be punished or rewarded in the next life for their conduct in this*; but it will prove that there was a man tormented in *hades*, who was a good man in some respects, and for aught we know, as good as any body else; it will prove that those who are in heaven are both wicked and miserable, that they wish to leave the place and go to hell; and it will prove that some notions which orthodox people have entertained for years, are totally erroneous. Those who contend that it is not a parable, for any thing we see, must allow all these things.

But it may be said that the passage understood literally, proves that men will be punished *after death*. We answer, if we interpret it *literally*, and suppose the death of the rich man to mean the departure of life from his animal frame, then it will teach that one man was tormented in another state of being; but whether it should be for one year, one day or hour, we could not tell. One thing is certain, it would not then prove the doctrine of *endless torment*, for the place, *the hell*, in which the rich man was tormented, *is to be destroyed*, according to the testimony of Hosea, "*O hades, I will be thy*

*destruction,*" (Hos. xiii. 14,) and of John, "*And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire,*" (Rev. xx. 14,) and of Paul, "*O hades where is thy victory,*" (1 Cor. xv. 55.) But if we may have the liberty of interpreting parables literally, we will engage to prove almost any thing. There is no intelligent christian who does not know, that those things which Jesus used as figures of the reality, should not be considered the reality itself.

There is sufficient evidence, both internal and external, to prove that the passage is a parable. We will first briefly examine the internal. It is stated the beggar was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. Now we ask, can any one suppose that this is to be understood in the *literal* sense? These people are represented as having bodily organs and powers. The rich man had eyes and a tongue, and Lazarus fingers. Can this be interpreted literally? Do disembodied spirits in the world to come have eyes, and tongues, and fingers, and the powers of speech, of hearing and seeing? <sup>1</sup>

1 "*Lift up his eyes.* These words, like as some of the following, must not be understood properly, for the soul being a spiritual being, hath neither eyes, nor tongue, nor finger, but by similitude, &c." See the Dutch Annotations, according to the translation of the Bible as ordered by the Synod of Dort. London, 1657.

Ver. 19. "This is more likely to be a parable than a true history."

23. *Lift up.* "All this ought to be understood figuratively." See pious and learned Annotations on the Holy Bible by John Diodati, of Geneva. London, 1651.

Dr. Whitby argues conclusively that the passage is a parable, and states that it was not original with Jesus, but was quoted by him from some Jewish writings. "That this is only a parable, and not a real history of what was actually done, is evident, 1st, because we find this very parable in the *Gemara Babylonicum*, whence it is cited by Mr. Sheringham, in the preface to his *Joma*. 2d. From the circumstances of it, viz. the rich man's lifting up his eyes in hell, and seeing Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, his discourse with Abraham, his complaint of being tormented with flames, and his desire

We do not profess to know much about spirits in another world, but we believe this is not the common opinion upon the subject. However, it belongs to those who say the passage is not a parable, to solve these difficulties, and to show us how people in heaven and hell can converse with apparent ease from one place to the other.

The external evidence that the passage is a parable, is the connexion in which it is found. We should maintain a proper connexion throughout our Lord's discourse. But we see no way to do this, if we do not consider the passage a parable. It is found connected with a number of parables, in Luke xv. and xvi. as we have already shown.

In the beginning of the 15th chapter, we find that the Scribes and Pharisees murmured, because Jesus received sinners and ate with them. In the three parables which fill up the remainder of this chapter, viz. that of the lost sheep, of the lost piece of silver, and of the prodigal son, Jesus vindicated that part of his conduct of which they had complained. But in the last of these three parables, a character was presented which had not appeared in either of the others. This was the elder son, who was angry because the prodigal was received into favor, and who very justly represented the scribes and Pharisees; for they murmured because Jesus Christ received sinners and ate with them. These Pharisees rejected the gospel; and this is represented by the elder son's refusing to go

that Lazarus might be sent to cool his tongue; and if all this be confessedly parable, why should the rest, which is the very parable in the *Gemara*, be accounted history?" Note on Luke xvi. 29.

Arch Bishop Tillotson remarks, that in some ancient MSS. the passage commences as follows: "And he spake a parable unto them, saying, there was a certain rich man, &c." See his Sermon on the parable. Dr. Gill has the same remark in his Commentary.



into his father's house. In the parable of the unjust steward, with which the 16th chapter is commenced, the same people are admonished for not making such improvement of the law, as would introduce them into the christian faith and church. The Pharisees being provoked at this, derided Jesus. After briefly describing to them their conduct, he says, "the law and the prophets were until John : since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Jesus then spake another parable, in which the folly of the Jews, in rejecting the gospel and adhering to the law, is represented by the sin of adultery. Then come the words of the passage before us ; "There was a certain rich man," &c. What is there in all this connexion which would have the least tendency to lead the mind to the doctrine which the passage is used to support ? It has been justly said, "To suppose that he who spake as never man spake, abruptly dropped the subject of the end of the law dispensation, and the introduction of the gospel, or kingdom of heaven, and having no further allusion to this subject, proceeded to give an account of the sin of adultery, which account occupies but one verse, and then again flies directly from this subject, to give a literal account about a rich man and a beggar, in this world and in an eternal state, is so unwarrantable, and so derogatory to the character of the divine orator, that it is a matter of wonder that such an opinion should ever have been honored with the consent of learned commentators."<sup>1</sup>

Having proved, as we think, that the passage is a parable, we shall now proceed to show the true meaning of the word *hades* ; and why our Lord

<sup>1</sup> Ballou's Sermon on the Parable, edition of 1819, page 7.

spake of it as a place of torment. *Hades* is the word rendered Hell. Its literal meaning is not a place of torment in another world : but *the state of the dead in general, without regard to the goodness or badness of persons, their happiness, or misery.* This was the meaning of the Hebrew word *Sheol*, which the LXX. have almost invariably rendered *Hades*.<sup>1</sup> *All men go down to hades at death, where they remain till the resurrection.* It is said in the scriptures that our Saviour's soul was in hell, *hades* ; not in a place of torment; but in the state of the dead, the grave. There it did not remain, for he rose from the dead. See Acts ii. 27. In the Improved Version, the place where the rich man was, is called "the unseen state," and in Wakefield's translation, "the grave." These are their definitions of *hades*. - Wakefield says, in his note on this place, "It must be remembered that *hades* no where means hell, *gehenna*, in any author whatsoever, *sacred* or *profane* ; and also that our Lord is giving his hearers a *parable*, (Matt. xiii. 34,) and not a piece of *real history*. To them who regard the narrative as exhibiting a *reality*, it must stand as an unanswerable argument for the *purgatory* of the *Papists*. The universal meaning of *hades* is *the state of death*." Whitby, who was farther

1 "The world hath been filled with disputes about the true signification of the word *Hades*, which is here translated Hell. The most probably true notion of it is, that it signifies *the state of the dead*, both of the dead body, and so it often signifieth the grave, and of the departed soul. A very learned man saith, that if he mistaketh not, this is the only text in scripture, in which by it is to be understood the *place of torments*. The Hebrew word which is translated by this, far more often signifieth the place of the blessed, whither the saints and patriarchs went when they died, than the place whither sinners went."—Poole's Continuator, London, 685.

"All learned Hebricians know that *Sheol* is more proper for the *grave* than Hell; and that the Hebrews have no word proper for Hell, as we take Hell."—Leigh's Critica Sacra, London, 1601.

from being a Universalist than Wakefield, says, "Sheol throughout the Old Testament, and Hades in the Septuagint, answering to it, signify *not a place of punishment, or of the souls of bad men only, but the grave only, or the place of death.*" He says, Hades is the place—"Whither we are all going." Jacob went there; Job *desired*, yea prayed to go there; Hezekiah expected to go there, for he said "I shall go to the gates of Hades." Whitby further says, "The ancient Greeks assigned one Hades to all that died, and therefore say, Hades receives all mortal men together, all men shall go to *hades.*" Dr. Campbell, a believer of the doctrine of endless misery, gives us the same account of *hades*. This then is what we must understand the word hell to mean, when it stands for *hades*,—a place to which all men go, good and bad. We must not, when we contemplate it, look forward beyond the resurrection. All men will be raised from *hades* to incorruption and immortality. *Then* *hades* will be destroyed. Our word hell, in its original signification, perfectly corresponded to the definition we have given of *Hades*. At the present time it does not; with christians generally, its meaning somehow has been changed; but we are informed, we believe by Dr. Doddridge, that the original sense of the word *hell* is now retained in the eastern, and especially in the western counties of England; where to *hele* over a thing is to cover it. Hence says Dr. Campbell, "it (*hades*) ought never in the scripture to be rendered *hell*, at least in the sense wherein that word is now universally understood by christians." He says, that with the meaning of *hades*, "the word *hell*, in its primitive signification, perfectly corresponded. For, at first, it denoted only what was secret or concealed." The rich man, and the beggar

and Abraham, were all represented as being in *hades* together. We do not read that one was in hell, but the other two in heaven. This differs materially, we know, from the common opinion on this subject ; but we see no way to avoid it. The passage contains not one word to the contrary. Nay, it rather favors the idea. For otherwise, how could the rich man see Abraham and Lazarus ? How could he converse with Abraham, and how could Abraham hear him ?

As we have proved by the most respectable, orthodox authority, that the literal and original meaning of *hades* is the same as the Hebrew *sheol*, signifying the state of the dead in general, the place whither we all go, whether good or bad, it remains for us to show why our Lord spake of it as a place of torment. Let it be then remembered, that when our Lord was upon the earth, the minds of the Jews had changed with regard to *hades* ; they had come to entertain different views of it from those they imbibed by reading the Old Testament. They had deviated from that sense in which the sacred writers had used it ; and thought that ghosts of departed men would be punished there. They did not think that all who went there would be unhappy ; for they supposed it was divided into different parts, for ghosts of different characters. That they did not learn this doctrine from the Old Testament, is sufficiently obvious ; for no such doctrine is there. Dr. Campbell says, "It is plain, that in the Old Testament, the most profound silence is observed in regard to the state of the deceased, their joys, or sorrows, happiness or misery." They could not have learned it from the New Testament ; for it was not then written. Where then did they learn it ? Answer, From the

idolatrous heathen nations around them. In support of this, we give a quotation from the learned author just named. He thus writes, Dis. vi. Part 2, Sect. 19. "But the opinions neither of Hebrews nor of the heathen, remained invariably the same. And from the time of the captivity, more especially from the time of the subjection of the Jews, first to the Macedonian empire, and afterwards to the Roman; as they had a closer intercourse with pagans, they insensibly imbibed many of their sentiments, particularly on those subjects, whereon their law was silent, and wherein by consequence, they considered themselves as at greater freedom. On this subject of a future state, we find a considerable difference in the popular opinions of the Jews in our Saviour's time, from those which prevailed in the days of the ancient prophets. As both Greeks and Romans had adopted the notion, that the ghosts of the departed were susceptible both of enjoyment and of suffering, they were led to suppose a sort of retribution in that state, for their merit or demerit in the present. The Jews did not indeed adopt the pagan fables on this subject, nor did they express themselves entirely in the same manner; but the general train of thinking in both came pretty much to coincide. The Greek *Hades* they found well adapted to express the Hebrew *Sheol*. This they came to conceive as including different sorts of habitations for ghosts of different characters." Here we have our question answered. On whose authority did the Jews believe that *Hades* was a place of punishment? Ans. On the authority of the heathen. The Dr. says, "they insensibly imbibed many of their sentiments, particularly on those subjects whereon their law was silent, and wherein, by consequence, they thought themselves as at

greater freedom. *On this subject of a future state, we find a considerable difference in the popular opinions of the Jews in our Saviour's time, from those which prevailed in the days of the ancient prophets.*" "The general train of thinking," says he, "in both (i. e. Jews and heathen) came pretty much to coincide." Now we believe that it was to this opinion, that *hades* was divided into different habitations, peopled by good and bad spirits, that our Lord alluded in the parable. Hence, both Abraham and the rich man are represented as being in one place, divided into different apartments by the great gulf. The Jews were tenacious of these opinions; and our Lord used them as figures of an important truth. And the reason why he spake in parables generally, may be rendered why he thus spake in the passage before us. He did not allude to their doctrine to recognise it as truth; no, and all the evidence we find in the passage of the truth of the heathen notions concerning *hades* is, that he used them as a similitude. In the parable of the sower, Jesus used natural things as similitudes of spiritual. We do not understand the figures as realities there, and we should not in the passage before us.<sup>1</sup> Have we not proved that the passage is a *parable*? Have we not shown that literally it proves a doctrine which nobody believes? We ask then, by what just rule of interpretation it can be said to prove the doctrine of a future state of punishment? We have the opinion of those who believed in endless misery, that this is a parable; we see nothing to prove it is not; and we then demand, why we should not adopt the same rules in explaining it that we do in

<sup>1</sup> If there are any who think that no parable, in its literal sense, is impossible, and that Jesus would not have used, even in figure, what is untrue in itself, let them consult Judges ix. 8—15.

explaining other parables ? Parables, we all know, are figurative language. The truth taught is to be sought under the figure.

If the passage be not a parable, it should be interpreted literally throughout. But this cannot be done, as we think we have shown. We, in this way, must receive the heathen's notion of *hades*; we must consider Abraham and Lazarus in hell, as well as the rich man, and this too with their bodies, with the senses of seeing, hearing, &c. &c. Who is prepared to admit this ? Let it then be distinctly understood, that it is our opinion, Jesus introduced those views of *hades* which the Jews had received of the heathen, and used them, in a parabolic sense, to illustrate his instructions. He did not recognise them as realities, any more than he did the figures and imagery of his other parables.

It has been justly remarked, that if Jesus meant to teach that *hades* was a place of punishment, he would have stated it plainly once at least. This he did not do. He hints it only, and then in a parable. And we think if the apostles had understood him as teaching that *hades* was a place of punishment, they would have asserted it. This they never did. They spake of *hades*, but not as a place of punishment, or torment.<sup>1</sup> Peter said, that Christ's soul was there ; not in a place of torment, but in the state of the dead. These facts weigh so heavily on our mind, that we esteem it unnecessary to say more, until some one shall attempt to show that the passage is not a parable ; and to invalidate the evidence we have given to the contrary. When any man feels disposed to contend for *heathen* notions of *hades*, as a doctrine of Christianity, we will

<sup>1</sup> See Balfour's 1st Inquiry, chap. i. sec. 2, which may be profitably read in reference to the subject before us.

then meet him in a proper way, and discuss the question concerning the higher origin of Christianity.

We will now endeavor to show the true application of the parable. But here we should again consult the connexion. Just before Jesus spake the parable, he said, "the law and the prophets *were until John*: since *that time* the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Here notice, that when Jesus spake these words, the law dispensation was ended; for that was "*until John*" only: "*since that time*," says Christ, "the kingdom of God (the gospel dispensation) is preached." "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." By this we learn that the law could not pass away, without being fulfilled. We now come again to the parable concerning adultery, which reads as follows: "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery." If the Jews had put away the law, and married another covenant *before John came*, they, in a parabolic sense, would have committed adultery. For infinite wisdom ordained that the law should remain "*until John*." And it ordained that it should remain no longer. For "*since that time* the kingdom of God is preached." The law was put away; it was fulfilled; "Christ is the end of the law;" he came to close the first dispensation, and introduce the gospel. The Jews, by rejecting the gospel, and adhering to the law, committed adultery, as would a man who should marry a woman that had been put away by her husband. The parable upon which we are now discoursing immediately follows. "There was a certain rich man," &c. The



same subject is continued through the chapter. The state of the Jews, after the kingdom of God had been taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof, is beautifully figured in the description of the rich man's circumstances.

By the rich man the house of Israel is represented. They are frequently spoken of under the figure of an individual in the scriptures. God said by Hosea, "When Israel *was a child*, then I loved him, and called *my son* out of Egypt." Hosea xi. 1. "So the Lord alone did lead him, (the house of Israel) and there was no strange God with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock." Deut. xxxii. 12, 13. These are sufficient to show that the posterity of Abraham are spoken of in the scriptures in the character of an individual.

This man was rich. "There was a certain *rich man*." He was blessed with a land flowing with milk and honey. He had advantage every way, chiefly because unto him was committed the oracles of God. In Rom. ix. 4, 5, we have in detail an account of this man's riches. "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God, blessed forever, Amen."

This man was clothed in "*purple and fine linen*." So Israel is represented in the scriptures as being clad. "I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badger's skin, and I girded thee

about with *fine linen*, and I covered thee with silk. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver, and thy raiment was of *fine linen*, and silk, and embroidered work." Ezek. xvi. 10—13. "And of the blue, and *purple*, and scarlet, they made clothes of service, to do service in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the Lord commanded Moses. And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and *purple*, and scarlet, and *fine twined linen*." Exodus xxxix. 1, 2.

He fared sumptuously every day. This was eminently true of Israel. God says, "thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil; and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom." The rich man's land flowed with milk and honey. He fed spiritually upon the knowledge of God, and upon the promises.

By Lazarus the beggar, the poor Gentiles excluded from the advantages which God's covenant people enjoyed, are represented. Paul details the poverty of the Gentiles. "*At that time,*" says he, "*ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.*" Eph. ii. 12. They were poor indeed. His being "full of sores," represented the moral condition of the Gentiles. By the death of the beggar is represented the Gentiles' release from their idolatrous worship; and his being carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, represented the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith of Abraham, by the messengers of God. The rich man died politically. He lost his riches, his purple and fine linen, his government, his city, and his existence as a body politic. He was buried. His going into outer darkness is justly represented by being buried. He

died to light, and went into darkness. The poor man died to darkness and came forth to light. Hence he is not said to be buried. The rich man sees Lazarus in Abraham's bosom;<sup>1</sup> he sees fulfilled the words of Christ, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." Matt. viii. 11 and Luke xiii. 28, 29.

The rich man calls upon Abraham, whom he addresses by the title of Father. This is characteristic of the Jews. Abraham was their father; and they seemed proud of their progenitor. Speaking to our Saviour, they said, "art thou greater than our father Abraham?" John told them, "think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father." Yes, they would be in favor with Abraham. They have disbelieved Jesus; they have abused their privileges; they have relied upon their national greatness, and the glory of their ancestors. When in distress, they turned to Abra-

<sup>1</sup> *Abraham's bosom.* This figure is drawn from the customs of the Jews at their feasts. When reclining on their couches at table, they sometimes placed their heads on one another's bosom, as a sign of equality and strict union among the guests. So John is said to have laid on Jesus' breast, John xiii. 25. See Bp. Pearce on Luke xvi. 22, and Horne's Intro. iii. 304. By Lazarus being in Abraham's bosom, or lying on his bosom, denotes his elevation to the same rank with the patriarch at the repast of the gospel, and the strict union between them. The whole is a figure, however, and denotes the same as when it is said, that "many shall come from the east and west, and shall *lie down* with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven," Matt. viii. 11; they should enter into the same kingdom, of which Abraham was a member by believing the promises concerning Christ; and they should, by faith, enjoy in that kingdom a strict equality and communion with him.

ham for mercy. But their national greatness is gone, and the glory of their ancestors can afford them no relief. Abraham is represented as recognizing the relationship. He refers the rich man to his former condition, as well as to that of the beggar, and seems to give this as a reason why the former was tormented and the latter blessed. This is according to the equality of God's ways. The Jews had possessed a knowledge of God, and been blessed for a long time, while the Gentiles had been without hope, and without God in the world. Now the scene is reversed according to the appointment of God. "It was necessary," said the apostles to them, "that the word of God should first have been spoken to you : but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Acts xiii. 46, 47.

The gulf which separated the rich man from Lazarus, very well represents any circumstance by which the Jews are separated from the Gentile nations. That such a separation has long existed, admits not of a doubt; and when we reflect that, although many centuries have passed away since the Jews forfeited their national character, they have never become mixed and lost among the nations, we can but recognize some manifest design of Providence in the event. By this gulf we may more particularly understand that purpose of God, in which it is determined, that the Jews shall not believe the gospel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. This was the subject of prophecy. Isaiah says, "who hath believed our report?" And John applies this to the unbelief of the Jews

in the Messiahship of Jesus. He says, "therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." John xii. 38—40. Matt. xiii. 14, 15. Mark iv. 11, 12. Luke viii. 10. Acts. xxviii. 26—28. Rom. xi. 8. The divine purpose in this, is consistent with God's impartial character. This blindness of the Jews is to bring about the conversion of the Gentiles, through whose mercy the Jews will at last obtain mercy. Paul, addressing one of the Gentile churches, says, "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy." Rom. xi. 30, 31. Of the unbelief of the Jews, the prophets had prophesied. When the Gentiles saw the prophecies fulfilled in the obstinacy of the Jews, they were convinced of the divine origin of Christianity; they pressed into the kingdom of God. By the mercy of the Gentiles the Jews are at last to obtain mercy. Paul says, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, *until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*. And so ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED; as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Rom. xi. 25, 26. Although the Jews are now shut out of the kingdom, we can easily perceive they are finally to be brought in. Jesus said unto them, "ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Matt. xxiii. 39. When

they will say this, we are not yet permitted to know ; but no one believes the divine testimony can doubt that they will at a proper time. The benefit derived from the gulf, will then be obtained, and Jews and Gentiles will rejoice together in the fruition of eternal life.



### Appendix.

WE cannot refrain from adding, by way of appendix to the notes on this parable, that writers of different christian denominations have taken the same view of it with ourselves. The following extracts from two authors of some note, confirm the remark here made.

Theophylact, from whose Commentary on the Four Gospels the following extract was made, lived in the eleventh century, and was Metropolitan of Bulgaria. He certainly was not an Universalist ; yet he considered it as by no means doing injustice to the parable, to explain it as we have done. Here follows the extract :

“In the preceding verses, our Lord had taught us to conduct ourselves properly with regard to our riches ; and to the same purpose, he adds, by way of example, this Parable. For this is a Parable, and not, as some have thought, a history ; because that the blessings of eternity were not yet adjudged to the righteous, nor the judgments to the wicked. But the Lord spake figuratively, designing to teach the unmerciful what was at length to come upon them, and on the other hand, to assure the afflicted how happy they are to become, for the evils they here sustain.” Accordingly, Theophy-

lact proceeds to apply this Parable, as a representation of the different conditions of the proud sinner and of the humble saint, after the general judgment ; and he incidentally reasons from the Parable, against Origen's doctrine of the restoration, because Abraham says, " that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence."

At last, however, Theophylact says, " But this Parable can also be explained in the way of allegory; so that we may say that by the rich man is signified the Jewish people. For they were formerly rich, abounding in all divine knowledge, wisdom and instruction, which are more excellent than gold and precious stones. And they were arrayed in purple and fine linen, as they possessed a kingdom, and a priesthood, and were themselves a royal priesthood to God. The purple denoted their kingdom; and the fine linen, their priesthood. For the Levites were clothed in sacerdotal vestments of fine linen; and they fed sumptuously and lived splendidly, every day. Daily did they offer the morning and the evening sacrifice; which they also called the continual sacrifice. But Lazarus was the Gentile people; poor in divine grace and wisdom, and lying before the gates: for it was not permitted to the Gentiles to enter the house itself, because they were considered a pollution. Thus, in the Acts of the apostles, we read that it was alleged against Paul that he had introduced Gentiles into the temple, and made that holy place common or unclean. Moreover, those people were full of fetid sores of sin, on which the impudent dogs, or devils, fed, who delight themselves in our sores. The Gentiles likewise desired even the crumbs which fell from the tables of the rich ; for

they were wholly destitute of that bread which strengthens the heart of man, and wanted even the smallest morsel of food; so that the Canaanite woman (Matt. xv. 27,) when she was a heathen, desired to be fed with the crumbs. In short the Hebrew people were dead unto God, and their bones, which could not be moved to do good, were perished. Lazarus also, I mean the Gentile people, were dead in sin. And the envious Jews who were dead in sins, did actually burn in a flame of jealousy, as saith the apostle, on account of the Gentiles being received into the faith, and because that those who had before been a poor and despised Gentile race, were now in the bosom of Abraham, the father of nations. And justly, indeed, were they thus revived. For it was while Abraham was yet a Gentile. that he believed God, and turned from the worship of idols to the knowledge of God. Therefore, it was proper that they who were partakers of his conversion and faith, should rest in his bosom, sharing the same final lot, the same habitation and the same blessedness. And the Jewish people longed for one drop of the former legal sprinklings and purifications to refresh their tongue, that they might confidently say to us that the Law was still efficacious and availing. But it was not, For the Law was only until John. And the Psalmist says, sacrifice and oblations thou wouldst not, &c."

Theophylact then briefly observes, that we ought to make a moral use of this Parable, and not despise our servants who stand at our gates. *Theophylacti in Quatuor Evangelia Enarrationes*, p. 119, Edit. Basil, 1525.

We may add the testimony of another writer, who, we suppose, was not an Universalist, to the



correctness of the views we have advanced. We extract the following from a work entitled a “Rationale of the Literal Doctrine of Original Sin, &c. By James Bate, M. A. Rector of Deptford.”

“We will suppose, then, *the rich man who fared so sumptuously*, to be the Jew; so amply enriched with the heavenly treasure of divine revelation. *The poor beggar, who lay at his gate*, in so miserable a plight, was the poor Gentile; now reduced to the last degree of want in regard to religious knowledge. *The crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table*, and which the beggar was so desirous of picking up, were such fragments of patriarchal and Jewish traditions as their travelling philosophers were able to pick up, with their utmost care and diligence. And those philosophers were also *the dogs that licked the sores* of heathenism, and endeavored to supply the wants of divine revelation, by such schemes and hypotheses concerning the nature of the gods, and the obligation of moral duties, as (due allowance for their ignorance and frailties) did no small honor to human nature, and yet thereby plainly showed, how little a way unassisted reason could go, without some supernatural help; as one of the wisest of them frankly confessed. About one and the same time, *the beggar dies, and is carried by the angels* (i. e. God’s spiritual messengers to mankind) *into Abraham’s bosom*; that is, he is engrafted into the church of God. *And the rich man also dies and is buried*. He dies what we call a political death. His dispensation ceases. He is rejected from being any longer the peculiar son of God. The people whom he parabolically represents, are miserably destroyed by the Romans, and the wretched remains of them driven into exile over the face of the earth; mere vagabonds, with a kind of mark set upon them,

like Cain their prototype, for a like crime ; and which mark may perhaps be their adherence to the law. Whereby it came amazingly to pass, that these people, though dispersed, yet still dwell alone and separate ; *not being reckoned among the nations*, as Balaam foretold. The rich man being reduced to this state of misery, complains bitterly of his hard fate : but is told by Abraham, that he slipped his opportunity, while Lazarus laid hold on his, and now receives the comfort of it. The Jew complains of the want of more evidence, to convince his countrymen, the five brethren ; and would fain have Lazarus sent from the dead to convert them. But Abraham tells him, *that if their own scriptures cannot convince them of their error, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead*. And exactly so it proved in the event. For, this parable was delivered towards the end of the third year of our Lord's ministry ; and in the fourth, or following year of it, the words put into the mouth of Abraham, as the conclusion of the parable, are most literally verified, by our Lord's raising another Lazarus from the dead. And we may presume that the beggar had the fictitious name of Lazarus given him in the parable, not without some reason, since the supposed request of the rich man, was fully answered, by our Lord's raising another, and a real Lazarus, from the dead. But what was the consequence ? Did this *notorious* miracle convince the rich man's brethren ? No, truly. His visit to them from the dead, was so far from convincing them, that they actually *consulted together, that they might put Lazarus also to death ; because that by reason of him, many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus*. So much for the true sense of this parable."

## Parable of the Unjust Judge.

—LUKE XVIII. 2—5.

*“ There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man : And there was a widow in that city ; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while : but, afterwards he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, Yet, because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.”*

DR. Campbell remarks, on ver. 1 of this chapter, that “ the words are a continuation of the discourse related in the preceding chapter, which is here rather inopportunately interrupted, by the divisions into chapters.” (Note on Luke xviii. 1) Jesus had been relating the persecutions his disciples must suffer, and the troubles in which the whole land of Judea would be involved, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. This event was truly desirable to them, as it would free them from the persecutions of the Jews, their bitterest enemies. The disciples knew full well that this event must happen, according to the predictions of their Lord; but as several years were to elapse before it would transpire, they would grow impatient and desponding. This parable, therefore, is spoken to them. “ And he spake a parable unto *them*,” i. e. the disciples. And his object in speaking the parable is plainly stated in ver. 1, viz. to show “ that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” This duty of great frequency in prayer is inculcated in other parts of the Scriptures. In Rom. xii. 12, the christians are urged to continue instant in prayer.

So in Luke xxi. 36, "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the son of man," meaning at his coming to destroy the Jewish state. The habit of the christians in frequent prayer, is referred to, Acts, xii. 5. "Peter therefore was kept in prison; but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." 1 Thes. v. 17. "Pray without ceasing." Coll. iv. 2. "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." All these expressions mean only great frequency in prayer. "*And not to faint.*" Here Jesus designs to show his followers, that there was danger of their becoming impatient and weary under the persecutions they suffered, and would suppose that he delayed his coming. In agreement with this, we find they did repine that the coming of Jesus did not take place so soon as they expected. Paul bids the Corinthians "wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. 1, 7. Jesus, in describing the persecutions his disciples would suffer, bids them in *patience* to possess their souls. Luke xxi. 19. Paul says to the Thessalonians, "the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the *patient waiting* for Christ," 2 Thess. iii. 5. It is said to the Hebrews, "ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Heb. x. 36, 37. To the same purport is the advice given by James. "Be *patient* therefore brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your

hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." James 7, 8. Jesus foresaw that his disciples would very naturally become discouraged and faint; and he uttered the parable before us to show "that men ought always to pray and not to faint."

"There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man;" i. e. these circumstances were conjectured; as though the Saviour had said, we will suppose there was in a certain city such a judge. The Saviour ascribes to him a highly daring character; "he feared not God, neither regarded man." "And there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him saying, avenge me of mine adversary," The word here rendered *avenge*, would more properly be translated in this place, *do me justice*, that is, against my adversary. The judge, not being moved by any motives of compassion or faithfulness, delayed to grant her request; "but afterward he said within himself, though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, (obtain for her justice) lest by her continual coming she weary me." Such was his motive; not to do good to the afflicted and oppressed, but to get rid of trouble; for this reason he granted her request, and gave her case adjudication. Here the parable ends, and the Saviour in the next place, proceeds to make the application, for the purpose of infusing encouragement into his disciples, and showing them "that men ought always to pray and not to faint."

"Hear what the unjust judge saith;" i. e. consider this case, meditate upon it. The design of Jesus was not to represent God as an unjust judge, who grants favors to men only at their earnest entreaties. The argument was this: If this unjust judge would do justice to a woman in answer to her in-

portunity, how reasonable is it to suppose that God will see justice done to his own elect, from the benevolence and rectitude of his own nature. This mode of reasoning was common with Jesus. We find an instance of it in the sermon on the mount, when he was endeavoring to inspire men with confidence in God, assuring them that, if they asked, they should receive; "for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Matt. vii. 8. Then comes the argument. "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?" Matt. vii. 9, 10. There is no such father on earth. Well, if imperfect and sinful men are so ready to give favors to their children, how much more ready is God to bestow blessings on those who ask him? Or to give the argument in the language of the evangelist, "if ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give good things to those who ask him?" Matt. vii. 11. If then the unjust judge heeded the importunity of the widow, how much more reasonable was it to suppose, that God would "avenge his own elect, which cry every day and night unto him, though he bear long with them." ver. 7. The elect here spoken of were the early christians, who are often called the elect in the scriptures. Hence it is said, that at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus would "gather *his elect* from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other," Matt. xxiv. 31. See also Mark xiii. 20, 22, 27. These elect God would avenge, he would see justice done to them although he bore long with them, i. e. delayed it for some time. "I tell you," says

Jesus, in closing the application of the parable, "that he will avenge them speedily," to which Arch Bishop Newcome adds, by way of explanation, "by bringing the Roman armies upon the Jews their persecutors" (Newcome's Observations.) And it is rendered more certain that the true application of the passage is to the destruction of Jerusalem, by the questions which Jesus asks, as follows: "Nevertheless, when the *son of man* cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" or *in the land* (of Judea) as some translate the passage. Whitby remarks here, "when the son of man comes to exercise this vengeance on the Jewish nation, how few shall he find in the Jewish nation that will believe it? As for the unbelieving Jews, though Christ and his forerunner had told them so frequently and plainly of their approaching ruin; and though they had so many signs of it recorded in Josephus, he tells us they were still expecting deliverance from God. And they among them who believed and professed the christian faith, being pressed with continual sufferings, began to grow weary and faint in their minds, and ask *where is the promise of his coming?* Yea, some of them began to forsake the assembling of the saints, Heb. x. 25, and many of them became apostates, and fell back to their old Judaism; so that all the epistles directed to them, are manifestly designed to keep them stedfast in the faith." (Paraphrase and Annot. Note on Luke xviii. 8.) Matthew represents Jesus as saying, that on account of the afflictions which should precede the destruction of Jerusalem, many should be offended, and the love of many should wax cold. At the time of Christ's coming, he found but little faith on the earth. This coming of Christ, it should be remembered, was not his personal ap-

pearance, but his gracious interposition in favor of his followers, and for the destruction of his enemies.



## Parable of the Pharisee and Publican.

LUKE XVIII. 10—14.

*“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”*

THIS passage is called by the evangelist a parable, although it partakes but little of the character of a parable, being rather a literal relation of the supposed conduct of the Pharisees and publicans. The object in stating it is explained in ver. 9. “And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.” There is a remarkable consistency in the characters of these men; for nothing could be more reasonably expected, than that those should despise others, who had a vain conceit of their own goodness. Jesus designed to draw the real character of the Pharisees, to contrast them with such as they regarded as sinners, and to show that God approved the latter in preference to themselves.



“Two men went up into the temple to pray.” This is a supposed case—not a real one. The temple at Jerusalem was the place where prayers were offered. One of these men was a Pharisee, the other a publican. The Pharisees were a very numerous and influential sect among the Jews. They were the principal opposers of Jesus Christ, who rebuked them with great familiarity, and pointed out their vices in a fearless and faithful manner. Although they were supposed by the common people to possess great sanctity, they were grossly hypocritical, and vain, and they did the greater part of their religious acts to be seen of men. This was their greatest fault. They loved the praise of men, and affected a righteousness they did not possess, to obtain it. Many of them probably supposed themselves to be truly righteous, like those mentioned in ver. 9, “who trusted in themselves that they were righteous.” The publicans, as we have shown in another place, were those who collected the public taxes. They were the objects of universal abhorrence among the Jews, and were supposed frequently to be guilty of great extortion in their exactions from the people. These were the characters of the two men who went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee *stood by himself*, not stood and prayed by himself, as it is the common version. Dr. Campbell renders the expression, “the Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus.” This is in perfect agreement with the character of a Pharisee. He was afraid of being polluted by the touch of the publican; and for this reason the Jews performed their frequent washings when they came from the markets, and other places of public resort. Mark vii. 4. They objected strongly to Jesus, who eat and drank with

the publicans and sinners, undoubtedly supposing that from a respect to his character he ought to have declined their company. The sense we have put on the phrase here, is justified by ver. 13, where we read that the publican *stood afar off*.

Let us observe the prayer of the Pharisee, which in fact, is not a prayer at all, but merely a declaration of his own goodness. Instead of praying, he boasted. In the first place, he mentioned those sins of which he said he was not guilty, as follows: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers." Here the spirit of the Pharisee is fully displayed. He could not think of the publican, without drawing a contrast between him, and himself. For in these words, "extortioners, unjust," he evidently alluded to the well known character of the publicans for extortion and injustice; and then he immediately adds, "or even as this publican." Now whether the Pharisee was not guilty of these sins, must depend solely on his own testimony, as no one else hath ever assured us that they were not "extortioners and unjust." From the description of the Pharisees which Jesus gave, we should conclude they were guilty of the highest rapacity and injustice, since he distinctly charges them with devouring widows' houses, and binding heavy burdens and grievous to be borne and laying them on men's shoulders. This was their real character; but the Pharisee, in the parable, like all other Pharisees, while he could see the failings of others with the keenest vision, could not see his own. We will now listen to his positive description of himself, and see what virtues he has actually performed. Hark! "I fast twice in the week, I give tythes of all that I possess." His prayer, if such it can be

called, is ended, and these were the virtues which he punctiliously performed. Did he say, Lord, I love my neighbor as myself—I do unto others as I would have them do unto me—I am kind to the distressed and unfortunate? No, the virtues of benevolence were not very precious in his sight. Here was the difference between the religion of the Pharisees and the religion of Christ. Their religion was a mere round of rites and ceremonies—mankind were not happier for it, it did not relieve the distressed; while the religion of Christ, was designed to promote “peace on earth, and good will towards men.” The Pharisee unquestionably mentioned what he thought were his best acts; and what were they? Fasting twice in the week, and paying tythes. In these, and other frivolous things, the Pharisees were very punctilious; but they fasted to be seen of men, Matt. vi. 16, and paid tythes that they might omit the weightier matters of the law, “justice, mercy and faith,” Matt. xxiii. 23. Their days of fasting were the second and fifth of every week, corresponding to our Mondays and Thursdays.

Let us turn now to the publican. He did not boast, nor think himself better than other men. He “would not lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, *God be merciful to me a sinner.*” What a contrast! a contrast which heightens the vanity and ostentation of the Pharisee. In the publican we see a pattern of true humility. Respectful to the feelings of the Pharisee, who he knew would not permit his approach, he stood afar off. His is a real prayer. “God be merciful to me a sinner.” As though he had said, God, I stand in need of thy mercy. I pray for a sinner, that mercy may be granted him. I am that sinner, O

God, be merciful to me. I pray for the forgiveness of my own offences.

These were the characters of the Pharisee and publican; and now it is an important question, which was justified in the sight of God. Men generally would have supposed the Pharisee to possess the most religion, who declared so solemnly before God that he was not like other men, that he did not commit extortion, nor injustice, but fasted twice in the week, and parted freely of his substance for the support of religion. But Jesus, who knew men's hearts, said of the publican, "this man went down to his house justified rather than the other."

It is evident that Jesus, in this parable, intended to present what men generally regarded as purest holiness on the one hand, and extreme wickedness on the other. The Pharisees were regarded as the most holy people on earth, and the publicans as the most wicked. The object of the parable before us was to show that the religion of the Pharisees was a mere observance of rites and ceremonies, which indeed obtained for them the praise of men, but not the praise of God, for they were destitute of the spirit of pure religion; while the publican, whom every body despised, sensible of his sins, and crying for mercy, was justified rather than the ostentatious, self-conceited Pharisee. The moral deduced from the parable is this: "for every one that exalteth himself shall be abused; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Those who are proud, who in their own estimation are above others, who assume a rank in society to which their virtues do not entitle them, must be abased; "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." But they who are

truly humble, who are sensible of their sins, who feel their utter dependance upon God, and cry unto him for mercy, shall be exalted. Pure and undefiled religion is benevolence and humility of heart, and uprightness of conduct. Those who possess this, even though they neglect what the world miscalls religion, will be justified in the sight of God. In the parable, the distinction is clearly made between spurious and true worship; and the disposition ascribed to the publican is worthy of being imbibed by all mankind.

The parable of the two sons is a very common one, and is found in many of the ancient writers. It is a parable of the two sons of the kingdom, the one who is the son of the kingdom, and the other who is the son of the world. The son of the kingdom is the one who is born of the Spirit, and the son of the world is the one who is born of the flesh. The son of the kingdom is the one who is true and honest, and the son of the world is the one who is false and dishonest. The son of the kingdom is the one who is humble and lowly, and the son of the world is the one who is proud and high. The son of the kingdom is the one who is meek and gentle, and the son of the world is the one who is fierce and angry. The son of the kingdom is the one who is patient and long-suffering, and the son of the world is the one who is impatient and short-tempered. The son of the kingdom is the one who is kind and merciful, and the son of the world is the one who is cruel and unmerciful. The son of the kingdom is the one who is pure and undefiled, and the son of the world is the one who is filthy and defiled. The son of the kingdom is the one who is true and honest, and the son of the world is the one who is false and dishonest. The son of the kingdom is the one who is humble and lowly, and the son of the world is the one who is proud and high. The son of the kingdom is the one who is meek and gentle, and the son of the world is the one who is fierce and angry. The son of the kingdom is the one who is patient and long-suffering, and the son of the world is the one who is impatient and short-tempered. The son of the kingdom is the one who is kind and merciful, and the son of the world is the one who is cruel and unmerciful. The son of the kingdom is the one who is pure and undefiled, and the son of the world is the one who is filthy and defiled.

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**Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard.**

MATT. XX. 1—15.

*“For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place. And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? is thine eye evil because I am good?”*

THIS parable was designed unquestionably to illustrate what is said at the close of chap. xix. viz.

“Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.” Dr. Campbell remarks that the particle *gar* with which the parable commences, “shows manifestly that what follows was spoken in illustration of the sentence with which the preceding chapter concludes, and which, therefore, ought not to have been disjoined from this parable.”<sup>1</sup> The whole connexion belonging to the parable, extends from chap. xix. 27 to xx. 16, which should have been made a chapter by itself.

The kingdom of heaven is here put for the laws and institutions of that kingdom. The dealings of God with men in that kingdom, are like the conduct of a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. He agreed with several for a penny a day, and sent them into his vineyard. This would be thought a very small compensation for a day's labor. It should be remembered that the piece of money here referred to was Roman coin, about the value of *ten cents*. This was the ordinary price of a day's labor at that time. See Tobit v. 14. Adam Clarke remarks, that “in 1531 the price of labor was regulated in England by Parliament; and it is remarkable, that corn weeders and hay makers, without meat, drink, or other courtesy demanded, were to have *one penny* per day. In 1314 the pay of a chaplain to the Scotch Bishops was three half pence per day. See Fleetwood's Chronicon Precios, p. 123, 129.”<sup>2</sup> This would have been miserable wages, had not every thing been cheap in proportion. The householder went out again about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market place, and he sent them into his vineyard, with the assurance that whatever was right he

<sup>1</sup> Note on the place. <sup>2</sup> Note on Matt. xx. 2.

would give them. "The Jews computed their hours of the civil day from six in the morning till six in the evening: thus their *first* hour corresponded with our *seven* o'clock, their *second* to our *eighth*, their *third* to our *nine*, &c."<sup>1</sup> The household-er went out about the sixth and ninth hours, and sent others into the vineyard. Again, about the eleventh hour, five o'clock in the afternoon, he went out, [into the market place, see ver. 3] and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, why stand ye here *all the day* idle? The reason they assigned was, because no man hath hired us. He sent them into his vineyard, with the promise that what was right he would pay. It seems to have been the custom for laborers, to go early in the morning to the market, and stand there until hired; and the customary hours of working were from six in the morning until six in the evening.<sup>2</sup>

We shall now turn from this notice of the customs on which the parable was founded, to seek the proper application of it. We have already stated, that the whole subject connected with this parable, extends from chapter xix. 27 to xx. 16,

<sup>1</sup> Horne's Intro. iii. 161.

<sup>2</sup> This custom remains to the present day in Persia. In the city of Hamadan there is a maidan or square in front of a large mosque. "Here," says Mr. Morier, "we observed every morning before the sun rose, that a numerous band of peasants were collected with spades in their hands, waiting, as they informed us, to be hired by the day to work in the surrounding fields. This custom, which I have never seen in any other part of Asia, forcibly struck me as a most happy illustration of our Saviour's parable of the laborers in the vineyard in the 20th chapter of Matthew, particularly, when passing by the same place late in the day, we still found others standing idle, and remembered his words, *why stand ye here all the day idle?* as most applicable to their situation: for, in putting the very same question to them, they answered us, *because no one hath hired us*," Morier's second Journey through Persia, p. 265.



which should have formed a chapter by itself. There is even a remote connexion with circumstances which are narrated farther back in chapter xix. than the 27th verse. A young man came to Jesus with the question, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" xix. 16. Jesus answered him in substance, that he must keep the law. His reply was, "all these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" xix. 20. In reply Jesus told him, to sell all that he had, and give to the poor. When the young man heard this, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. 22. This drew from the Saviour the following remark: "a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." 23, 24. This similitude, drawn in the strong eastern manner, was designed to shew the extreme difficulty with which the rich in this world's goods, were persuaded to leave their possessions, and become poor and enter the kingdom of Christ, and become his followers. The young man had just afforded an instance of the truth of the remark; and as to become a follower of Christ, in that persecuting age, required a sacrifice of all earthly considerations, so, of course, it would be more difficult for the rich, who were bound to the earth by a thousand ties, to get released from its influences, than the poor. When his disciples heard his remark, concerning the difficulty with which the rich would enter his kingdom, they expressed their surprise by saying, "who then can be saved?" We have already given the sense of this phrase, pp. 96, 97. Jesus intimated that even such would be converted, for although with men this was impossible,

“with God all things are possible.” Ver. 26. We have now arrived at the more immediate context. Peter, who had listened to all his Master had said to the young man, that he must be willing to part with all his earthly possessions, now breaks out in an expression of his own feelings, and shews what thoughts were predominant in his own mind, “Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?” 27. As though he had said, ‘Lord, we have obeyed thy commands; we have given up all we had on earth, and followed thee; and now what reward are we to have?’ A question of a similar nature was asked by some of the disciples on another occasion: “who is *the greatest* in the kingdom of heaven?” Matt. xviii. 1. xx. 20. Luke xxii, 24. In both these questions, the followers of Christ manifested some impatience for their reward; and evinced a desire to be exalted above others, in consequence of their services. This ought to be borne in mind, when we come to the application of the parable. The answer of Jesus to Peter’s question was as follows: “Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;” 28. i. e. in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye which have followed me shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel—a figurative expression to denote that the apostles would be raised to stations of eminence in the church, at the coming of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, Jesus said to Peter, “And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Campbell’s note on this verse.

children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." 29. The meaning of the expression, "to enter into *life*," we have already fully explained. See particularly pp. 12, 21, 22. Everlasting life was that state of peace and rest into which the believers of the gospel entered, and which the church of Christ preeminently enjoyed, when delivered from her persecutors at the coming of Christ to destroy the Jewish nation; and this is called, in our version, *everlasting life* from the Greek phrase *zoen aionion*, which is generally, if not invariably, applied to the time of the gospel dispensation. See our remarks on Matt. xxv. 46; under the parable of the Sheep and Goats, and compare also the following passages of scripture: John v. 24. vi. 47, 54. xvii. 3. Rom. vi. 22. 1 John v. 13. In pursuing the context, we have now brought ourselves to the last verse of chap. xix. as follows: "But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." The apostles, who were the *first* to embrace the gospel, would not receive their reward until the *last*; while those who were *last*, who did not embrace the gospel until after the apostles, should be rewarded *first*. The apostles did not receive their reward until a late period—their pre-eminent services exposed them to pre-eminent dangers and sufferings, and persecution raged against them longer than any others. The parable of the laborers in the vineyard was designed to illustrate the facts here stated, and to reprove the apostles for the desire they had manifested to receive greater rewards than should be conferred on others. See particularly Mark x. 35, 37. We have already shown, that there can be no question that the parable before us was designed to illustrate what is

said xix. 30, "but many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first;" and this fact is rendered more evident from the circumstance, that immediately on closing the parable, Jesus adds "so the last shall be first, and the first last," as he had illustrated in the parable.

We proceed then to say, that the dealings of God with men, in the dispensation of the gospel, were like those of a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. The earliest professors of Christianity, were those who went first into the vineyard. Those who subsequently embraced the gospel, were such as entered the vineyard later in the day. As the lord of the vineyard rewarded all the laborers, so all the followers of Christ were assured of their reward; and as the master of the house, in rewarding the laborers, began at the *last*, and proceeded unto the *first*, so some that embraced the gospel at a late season, would be rewarded before others who had been more conspicuous in their defence of Christianity. As those who entered first into the vineyard *murmured* against the good man of the house because he gave to each laborer a penny, so the disciples were desirous of being exalted above others, in consequence of their labors in the vineyard of their Master.

This, it appears to us, was the original design of Jesus in uttering this parable. We are willing to admit, however, that it is easily susceptible of an application to the Scribes and Pharisees, who murmured at Jesus Christ, because he received sinners, and showed them favor. In fact the words which, as we have shown, the parable was designed to illustrate, are applied in another place to the Jews. See Luke xiii. 28—30, where the evangelist de-

scribes the rejection of the Jews from the kingdom of the gospel, and the reception of the Gentiles ; when he adds, "and behold there are last that shall be first, and there are first that shall be last." Here these words signify, that the Jews to whom the gospel was first preached, would be the last to embrace it ; whereas the Gentiles, to whom it was not preached until after it was rejected by the Jews, would embrace it first. If we interpret the parable to refer to the Pharisees, the application cannot be very particular. In that case, we must suppose the circumstances to be thrown together for the purpose of setting out the envious and murmuring disposition of the Pharisees, who thought they had a difficult duty to perform in serving God, who claimed a large reward for it, expecting to be exalted above others, and who found fault with Jesus because he bestowed blessings on all mankind. That such was the disposition of the Pharisees we have sufficiently shown in this work ; and their conduct may be well illustrated by that of the laborers who murmured against the good man of the house, because each one received a penny.

The same disposition is frequently seen at the present day, in those persons who profess to be the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. They boast that they serve God in this life, while others are engaged in the practice of sin ; and they confidently look forward to the time of *reckoning*, when they hope to be distinguished from others, and exalted above them. If we tell them that at last every man will receive a penny, or, in other words, that God will raise all men to the enjoyment of equal bliss, they are angry ; they murmur against those who preach such a doctrine, as the laborers murmured against the master of the house ; they

complain that they have "borne the burden and heat of the day," and maintain that they ought, therefore, to receive a greater reward than others in the world to come. They declare in substance, that if they are to have but one penny, others ought not to have so much; but if others are to receive that sum, they ought in all justice to have more. *Equality* is one of the seven things which are an abomination to them; and like the murmuring laborers they cry out in indignation, "thou hast made them EQUAL UNTO US." They claim an exclusive reward on the ground that they have wearied themselves to serve God; they have resisted the temptations and pleasures of sin, and worn the heavy yoke of obedience; they place their claim for a greater reward than others have, where the murmuring laborers put theirs, on the fact that they "have borne the heat and burden of the day." But the insufficiency of all their claims is very easily perceived. If they really loved God, and loved to serve him, they would not call his service a weariness, and a trouble; they would not represent the service of sin as easy and pleasant; but they would regard the duty of a Christian as Jesus regarded it, when he said, "my yoke is *easy*, and my burden is light," Matt. xi. 30. The enjoyments of religion and virtue would be to them the richest enjoyments they had on earth; and so far from claiming any other reward for walking in the path of wisdom, they would feel themselves laid under a *debt* of gratitude to God, for having guided their feet in the way of peace. This is the feeling of every true Christian. He finds an abundant reward in obedience itself—this is his joy, his crown, his heaven. The wicked are to him objects of pity, not of envy; and he prays,

not that they may remain wicked and miserable forever, but that they may be converted, brought to the knowledge of the truth, and made holy and happy. He prays God to bless *the wicked*, for he sees that the good are sufficiently blessed in being made good.

Let us learn from the parable before us, to guard against the odious spirit of envy ; to cultivate the meek and forgiving spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ ; and to govern our actions by that rigid rule of impartiality which distinguishes the divine administration.



## Parable of the Two Sons.

MATT. XXI. 28—31.

*“A certain man had two sons ; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not ; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir ; and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.”*

THIS parable is preceded in the narrative of the evangelist, by an account of an interview which took place between our Lord, and the chief priests and the elders. They came unto him with these questions, “by what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?” ver. 23. To this Jesus said, “I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things,” ver. 24. The

question which Jesus asked them was as follows: "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?" This inquiry threw them into a dilemma, and they could not readily determine what answer to return. "And they reasoned with themselves, saying, if we shall say, from heaven, he will say unto us, why did ye not then believe him? But, if we shall say of men, we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet." The dishonesty of these priests and elders is remarkable. They either believed that the mission of John was of divine authority, or they did not, and whatever their opinion was, they might have answered the question readily and honestly. But it seems not to have occurred to them, that it was best to give a direct and sincere answer. They began immediately to inquire how an answer would affect themselves; and after weighing the result, first on the one side, and then on the other, they came to the conclusion that it was expedient to utter a falsehood, and declare that they could not tell. "And they answered Jesus, and said, *we cannot tell.*" Jesus then declares, "neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." Ver. 27.

After this conversation had taken place, Jesus immediately embraced the opportunity to propose to them the parable now before us. Although disposed to ask questions, they had shown themselves unwilling to answer a simple question which had been just put to them in turn; whereupon Jesus resolved to put a question to them which it was probable they would answer, and in answering which he foresaw they would condemn themselves. "But what think ye?" said he; i. e. give me your opinion on the subject I am about to lay before you. "A certain man had two sons; and he came to the



first and said, son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not ; but afterward he repented and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir, and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father?" They did not find any difficulty in answering this question, but with great readiness replied, that the son who said he would not, but afterwards repented and went into his father's vineyard, did the will of his father ; i. e. he did that which was the more acceptable in the sight of his father. Jesus adds, " verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

From these circumstances it appears evident, that the priests and elders were represented by the son who said to his father, "I go, sir, and went not."

The publicans and harlots were represented by the son who said, "I will not, but afterwards repented and went."

The design of this parable was to show, that those who appear the most ready to do their duty, are not always the most faithful in performing it ; and, on the other hand, that those who make no professions of obedience, do sometimes perform it more readily and faithfully than others.

The priests and the elders professed to be the people of God ; they alleged that they were his children, and that they were ready to do his will ; but it was notoriously manifest that they had not done it. Like the son who said, I will, but did not, so they had declared that they would obey God, but had failed altogether in this respect. The priests and elders were a peculiarly religious people in their own estimation : they attended to all the duties of religion, such as praying, fasting, paying

tythes and making proselytes ; but the commands of God they did not obey. By their professions they said they would obey, but their conduct evinced that they would not. They said, "if they had lived in the days of their fathers, they would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets ;" Matt. xxiii. 30, but Jesus told them that they proved themselves the sons of those who killed the prophets : They had persecuted John ; they had persecuted Christ ; and they had proved abundantly, that their professions were not to be depended on ; for, as the Saviour remarked, Matt. xxiii. 3, "they *say* and *do not*."

The conduct of the publicans and harlots was directly contrary to that of the priests and elders. They professed nothing, and made no pretensions to religion. They were like the son, who said he would not go and labor in the vineyard of his father. He did not give any encouragement that the least service might be expected of him ; neither did they put forth any indications that they would be likely to embrace the religion of Jesus Christ. They however did give attention to the instructions of Jesus, and turned to God ; and hence Jesus said to the priests and elders, "the publicans and harlots believed him ;" i. e. they regarded what John had said concerning the Messiah. Here then the case is fairly before the reader. The priests and elders were professedly a religious people, and claimed to be regardful of the commands of God ; but notwithstanding this they opposed the religion which God sent Jesus into the world to establish. On the other hand, the publicans and harlots laid no claim to be considered religious, and from their characters, the world in general would have concluded them the last who should be con-

verted to the religion of Christ ; but like the son who said he would not, but afterwards repented and went, they, against all their former indications, were among the first to enter the kingdom of the gospel. "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Ver. 31.

There can be no question that what is here stated was a fact. This class of people became exceedingly fond of the society of Jesus, and listened to his instructions with great delight. Matthew himself had been a publican. They eat and drank with Christ, and he was contemptuously styled by the Pharisees, the friend of publicans and sinners. Despised as they were by the leading religious people of the age, accustomed to reproach and contumely, they rejoiced to find their cause espoused by the great teacher sent from God. His doctrine met, and satisfied their desires, and they received it with joy. "The common people heard him gladly," Mark xii. 37. For the proud, the censorious, the self-righteous—those who thought they had gained heaven by their own exertions, and who anticipated with fondness the joyful day when they should see those they despised suffering the fierce displeasure of God—for such the benevolent, impartial religion of Jesus had no charms. Such people always opposed Christ when he was on earth ; and in every age since, those of a kindred disposition have hated his doctrine. These are the reasons why the publicans and harlots entered the kingdom of God before the professedly religious Scribes and Pharisees. We learn from this what class of people it is, among whom, it may be expected, at the present day, the doctrine of the impartial Saviour shall flourish in its purity.

## Parable of the Unfaithful Husbandmen.

MATT. XXI. 33—41.——MARK XII. 1—9.——LUKE XX. 9—16.

*“There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants; and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.”—Matt. xxi. 33—41.*

THE design of this parable was borrowed in part from the prophecy of Isaiah, although it is considerably extended by our Lord. Isaiah v. 1, 2. It was spoken to the chief priests and elders, ver. 23, as was the parable which we last noticed. This is evident from ver. 33, “Hear another parable;” a sure proof that both were delivered to the same persons. Let us attend first to the illustration of the terms of the parable, and second to its true application.

“There was a certain householder which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and dig-

ged a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country." The vineyards of the east were sometimes hedged about with thorns, and sometimes enclosed by walls. Psalms lxxx. 12. The wine press is represented to have been *dug* in the vineyard. This, says Keurick, "is agreeable to the custom of the east, where wine presses are not moveable, as with Europeans, but formed by digging hollow places in the ground, and surrounding them with mason work."<sup>1</sup> The tower was placed so as to overlook the whole vineyard, and it was designed not for purposes of security, but of watching, to guard the vineyard from thieves, when the fruit was ripe.<sup>2</sup> "And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it." The rent of the vineyard was paid from the products of it. This was a very general custom, as we have illustrated under the parable of the "Unjust Steward."

The means of divine instruction which God from time to time had afforded the Jews, are, in the parable, represented by a vineyard hedged round about, and put in the most perfect order.

The servants whom the householder sent to the husbandmen to receive the fruits of the vineyard, represent those whom God had sent, at different times, to the house of Israel, to induce them to

<sup>1</sup> Exposition on the passage.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Buckingham, an eastern traveller of considerable note, remarks, that "in the route between Jerusalem, and the convent of St. Elias, he was particularly struck with the appearance of several small and detached square towers, in the midst of the vineyards. These, his guide informed him, were used as watch towers, whence watchmen to this day look out, in order to guard the produce of the lands from depredations."

bring forth fruit worthy of the distinguished advantages which they had enjoyed.

These servants were treated with contumely and cruelty. Some were beaten, some were stoned, and some were slain. Other servants were sent, and they were treated in the same manner. Last of all the householder sent his son, and he was slain. The application of this can hardly be mis-taken. All the messengers whom God had sent to the house of Israel met with such a reception from the Jewish nation, more particularly from their priests and elders, and ecclesiastical leaders. They shed the blood of the prophets, Matt. xxiii. 30; the apostles were persecuted in every variety of form; and Jesus Christ, *the Son of God*, the Jewish nation seized and slew.

“When the lord of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto these husbandmen?” inquired Jesus. The answer is, “he will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.”<sup>1</sup> This was the fate of

<sup>1</sup> Matthew represents this answer to have been made, by the chief priests and elders: but Mark (xii. 9) and Luke (xx. 16) represent Christ himself as answering the question. Bp. Pearce notices the discrepancy without attempting to account for it. The usual opinion is that the answer was given by Christ, and not the priests and elders; and that the words in Matt. *they say unto him*, are an interpolation. This suspicion is confirmed by one or two ancient MSS. not having the words. See A. Clarke on Matt. xxi. 41. The suspicion is confirmed also by Luke's account, since there the Pharisees are represented as saying “God forbid,” when they heard that the lord of the vineyard would destroy the husbandmen. xx. 15. Kenrick says, “According to the evangelists Mark and Luke, Jesus himself answered the question which he had proposed; and Luke adds, “when they,” i. e. the priests, “heard it, they said, God forbid.” This corresponds perfectly well to the question which Christ puts to them in 43d verse, which seems to imply that they had denied the propriety of the conclusion which he had made. It is high-

the house of Israel. They were miserable, and they were miserably destroyed. The means of divine instruction were taken away, and conferred on a people who would make good use of them; or to use the words of Christ, in which he himself makes a direct application of the parable, "the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation *bringing forth the fruits thereof*," ver. 43.

That this is the true application of the parable, there seems no room for doubt. We have shown, that our Lord derived the design from Isaiah v. 1, 2. There the vineyard is expressly said to be the house of Israel. The figure is varied but a trifle; and the destruction of the Jews is represented by the destruction of the vineyard, of which the walls were broken down, that it lay waste; it was neither pruned nor digged; briars and thorns sprung up in it; and the clouds gave it no rain.

The object of God in sending his servants to the Jews, was to induce them to bring forth fruits worthy of the distinguished advantages they enjoyed. John, the Baptist, told the Pharisees, to "bring forth *fruits* meet for repentance," Matt. iii. 8. This is very well represented by the master's sending his servants to the husbandmen, to receive the fruits of the vineyard.

The chief priests and elders saw plainly that *they* were intended as the husbandmen who had the charge of the vineyard, and who had behaved so unfaithfully in maltreating the messengers of God. See verse 45. "And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, *they perceived that*

ly probable, therefore, from these circumstances, that the words, *they say unto him*, have been introduced into this place by some mistake, a conjecture which is confirmed by the authority of one manuscript copy of the original, which omits them." Note on Matt. xxi. 41.

*he spake of them.*" And then, as though to verify that to which they took such strong exceptions, "they sought to lay hands on Jesus, but they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet." Ver. 46. They then stood ready to seize the heir and kill him, but they were afraid of the people, who had been instructed by Jesus, and in whose affections he held a high place. They never, however, abandoned their object; and afterwards they succeeded in slaying him.

The coming of Christ in his glory, at the end of the legal dispensation, is represented by the lord of the vineyard's returning to his household; at which time the Jews, the enemies of Jesus, who shed the blood of the prophets and apostles, and crucified Jesus Christ, were destroyed, as will be shown more fully under a succeeding parable. The words of Jesus, recorded in Matt. xxiii. 34—36, illustrate this. "Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily, I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." Their guilt in destroying the different messengers whom God had sent, is here described, and the punishment thereof is denounced; and all this we are assured should come upon that generation. Hence, the Jews were destroyed *during that generation*. The kingdom of God, which till the death of Christ, had been preached only to them, was afterward preached to the Gentiles, according to the last command



Jesus gave his apostles, as follows: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark xvi. 15. These were the nations who were to bring forth the fruits of it; and they did bring forth the fruits of it. It was established among them; and has had an amazing influence, in turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and satan unto God.

Jesus quotes to the chief priests and elders a saying of David, recorded Psalms cxviii. 22; "the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head stone of the corner." From this he draws a very forcible figure; see ver. 44. "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder." The Jews had then already fallen on that stone, (Christ) and it was afterwards to fall on them. Paul says, Rom. ix. 32, "they stumbled at that stumbling stone." A person may be injured by falling on a stone; but if that stone fall on him, the injury must be much greater. The tremendous judgments in which Jesus descended upon the Jews, are represented by the stone falling on them, which was to grind them to powder. They may be said, almost literally, to have been ground to powder. The nation was destroyed; and the different individuals of which it was composed, were driven, as it were, by the winds of heaven, into every corner of the earth. The punishment was great, but it was just; it was commensurate to their great wickedness. Their eyes had been shut against the light of truth; the most faithful counsels they had set at naught; the messengers of God they had stoned, and his Son they had slain. The judgments of God fell upon them; and they were ground to powder beneath their force.

## Parable of the Marriage Feast.

MATT. XXII. 2—13.

*“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son. And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

It will be perceived, by a reference to the commencement of this chapter, that the same subject is continued which occupies so large a part of the preceding, viz: the rejection and destruction of the Jews, and the reception of the Gentiles into the kingdom of God. See ver. 1: “And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables.”

The parable now before us was addressed to the same people to whom the two parables in chap. xxi had been addressed. Compare xxi. 23, 45, 46, and xxii. 1. And that the parable before us was designed to illustrate more fully what had been taught in the two preceding parables, is proved by a comparison of xxi. 35—39, with xxii. 6, and xxi. 41, with xxii. 7. Jesus having said to the chief priests and elders, xxi. 43, “the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, *and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof*,” he designs, in the parable before us, to show the *welcome reception* which the gospel would meet among the Gentiles. What is said in vers. 11—13 is rather an appendix to the parable, to show that those who professed to embrace the gospel, if they were not clad in the proper christian virtues, would be detected, exposed and punished.

The parable of the “marriage feast,” like that of the *ten virgins*, Matt. xxv. 1—13, is founded upon the customs of the Jews, at their weddings. One of their most indispensable customs was that of furnishing a feast, or feasts, at a marriage; and if the parties were wealthy, the feasts continued seven days, as will appear from Judges xiv. 10, 12, 17. Hence, many commentators render the passage, “the kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, who made a *marriage feast* for his son;” and several instances are given from the classics, where *gamous* is used to signify *marriage festivals*. That a marriage festival is intended in the case before us, is evident from ver. 4. This, as we have said, was an indispensable part of the nuptial ceremonies. The guests who were invited to the marriage, were expected to be dressed in a manner suited to the splendor of such an occasion. Among

the Orientals long white robes were worn at public festivals; and those who appeared on such occasions with any other garments, were esteemed highly culpable, and sometimes worthy of punishment. The person who invited the guests prepared such a garment for each, for the time being; with which he was furnished on his application to the ruler of the feast. It is supposed the prophet refers to this practice, when he says, "For the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests. And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and *all such as are clothed with strange apparel.*" Zeph. i. 7, 8. Dr. Hammond remarks, that there was a garment which was customary at marriage feasts, called *enduma gamou*, (the same phrase found in the parable) and he quotes from several authors in proof. He adds, that this garment was considered so necessary that without it, even they who were invited to the wedding, were not permitted to remain <sup>1</sup> Bishop Pearce remarks, that "mention is made of such a garment by heathen writers: for Aristophanes in *Avib* v. 1692, speaks of a *wedding garment*, and Eustathius, in his note upon *Hom. Odyss. z. 28*, has these words, *it was a custom for the bride to make presents of garments to the people belonging to the bridegroom at the time of the wedding.* We learn from *Cic. Orat. in Vatin. c. xiii.* that a white habit was commonly worn at feasts, among Romans. *Cum ipse epuli dominus, Q. Arrius, allatus esset.*" <sup>2</sup>

It seems necessary further to remark, in regard to eastern marriages, that they were generally solemnized in the evening. After the connubial

<sup>1</sup> Para. and Annot. on Matt. xxi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Com. on Matt. xxii. 11.

union was ratified and attested, and the religious parts of it concluded, it was customary for the bridegroom, among the Jews, as well as among the Greeks and Romans, to conduct his spouse in the evening from her friends to her new abode, with all the pomp, brilliancy and joy that could be manifested. On the arrival the marriage feasting commenced, in apartments splendidly lighted, which formed the greatest possible contrast to the darkness that prevailed without. Nothing could exceed the elegance of these scenes. The couches on which the guests reclined—the sparkling ornaments of the women—the uniformity in the dress of the company—the long white robes in which they were clad—the effulgent light of the hall—all conspired to give the occasion a brilliancy surpassing description. With these preliminary observations, we proceed to ascertain the true application of the parable.

1. What is meant by the “marriage feast”? See Notes on the parable of the Supper, pp. 111, 112. “Under the image of an invitation to a feast, Christ represents *the offer of the gospel to the Jews*. This contained the choicest blessings which God had to bestow, and might be fitly compared to the dainties of a feast upon a most joyful occasion, the marriage of a son.”<sup>3</sup>

2. Who were those first bidden to the wedding, but refused to come? There cannot be a question that the Jews are here intended. This is a construction on which we believe all commentators agree. They, first of all men, were invited to receive the gospel. The apostles were directed not to enter into any city of the Samaritans, but to “go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Isra-

<sup>1</sup> Kenrick's Expos. on Matt. xxii. 2.

el." Matt. x. 5, 6. See also Matt. xv. 24. Paul said to the Jews, "It was necessary that the word of God should *first* have been spoken to you." Acts xiii. 46. The command to preach the gospel to the Gentile nations was not given until after the resurrection of Christ. Mark xvi. 15. The Jews had been frequently invited to partake of this feast; first by the prophets, afterwards by John the Baptist, then by the apostles and by Jesus himself. They made light of these invitations. In the parable of the Supper, (see p. 113 of this work) one begged to be excused for he had bought a piece of ground; another, for he had purchased a yoke of oxen; and a third, because he had married a wife. So here it is said, one went to his farm, another to his merchandise. In this way the Jews made light of God's invitation. They considered it of greater importance to attend to their secular concerns, than to comply with it. Because Christ and the apostles pressed this subject upon their attention, they were enraged, and sought to destroy them. In the words of the parable, they took these servants of God, "and entreated them spitefully, and slew them." For God to send the gospel to the Jews before any people upon earth, was an evidence of his regard; but to meet it with such trifling excuses as the Jews did, and moreover to slay the messengers who brought it to them, was a high offence, well worthy of the signal punishment they suffered. This punishment is described in ver. 7. "But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth *his armies*, and *destroyed* those murderers, and *burnt up their city*." This verse marks very distinctly, and beyond dispute, the true application of the parable. The punishment the Jews were to suffer for their

rejection of Christ, was their own destruction, and the destruction of their city, by the Roman armies, about forty years after this parable was spoken. So say commentators of all denominations. Whitby says, "upon their refusal God decreed to send the Romans to destroy the Jews, and burn their temple, and their city: which they so fully performed as to destroy, during those wars, saith Josephus, *eleven hundred thousand* Jews, to burn their Temple, consume, and so long waste their city, as that all men conceived, it never could be built again."<sup>1</sup> With this Kenrick, Bishop Pearce, and all the principal commentators agree. Thus the Jews proved themselves *unworthy* the "marriage feast;" as it is said in the 8th verse, "but they which were bidden were *not worthy*." The Jews judged themselves unworthy, as Paul told them at Antioch. "It was necessary that the word of God should *first* have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves *unworthy* of everlasting life, (which all who believed in Christ *then* enjoyed, see John v 24,) lo we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, (in Isaiah xlix. 6) I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Acts xiii. 46, 47.

3. Who were those afterward bidden to the "marriage feast"? See the Notes on the parable of the Supper, pp. 113, 114. Those who embraced the gospel of Christ on its rejection by the Jews, were the Gentiles. There were, it is true, a few of the Jewish nation who were converted to Christ; but the wedding may be said to have been furnished with guests from among the Gentiles, as the passage just quoted from Acts shows. The

<sup>1</sup> Com. on Matt. xxii. 7.

servants of Christ went out through all the world. They went into the highways, the lanes, the streets, the markets, and all places of public resort, and preached the gospel to mankind. They met with great success. Before the destruction of Jerusalem, the gospel had been preached to all nations, and great multitudes had become obedient unto the faith. Thus the wedding was furnished with guests.

It should be very distinctly remarked, that the servants "gathered together all as many as they found, both *bad and good*." This shows that Jesus foresaw that some unworthy professors would claim to be members of his kingdom, or guests at the marriage feast, a fact which is stated in several of the parables. In one we find that the "wheat and chaff" are mingled together; Matt. iii. 12; in another the tares and the wheat; xiii. 30; the net that was cast into the sea gathered of every kind; xiii. 48. Many would say, "Lord, Lord," that would not *do the will* of their Father in heaven; they would pretend that they had prophesied in the name of Christ, in his name cast out devils, and done many wonderful works. He would reply to them, "I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity." vii. 21—23. Let these facts be remembered, while we pass to the consideration of the guest who had not on the "wedding garment."

4. Who were signified by the guest that had not on the "wedding garment"? "When the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who had not a wedding garment. And he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless." The persons assembled on this occasion, were collected together from the highways, and must,



therefore, have consisted of poor, as well as of rich. Hence it may appear strange that the king should ask one of the guests, with surprise and displeasure, how he came there without a wedding garment, and punish him with so much severity for not having one, when his poverty might have been so reasonably urged in his defence, as an excuse for his dress. This difficulty is removed when we consider the customs of the eastern nations, whose wealth consisted very much in possessing large collections of dresses. Hence it is, says Kenrick, "that when our Lord speaks of laying up treasures on earth, he says, 'that the moth may corrupt,' Matt. vi. 20, plainly alluding to clothes." From these dresses, or from others collected on the occasion, it was customary, as we have said, to furnish the guests at marriage festivals; and as one was offered to each person, this man was highly blameable for appearing in his common dress; as he thereby offered an indignity to the person who invited him. He was thus left without excuse, as he might have been clad in the 'wedding garment,' had he seen fit.

By the guest without the 'wedding garment,' we are disposed to think Jesus designed to represent such of the Jews, as having nominally embraced Christianity, did not possess the virtues of the Christian character—such as cried Lord, Lord, but did not the will of God. Notwithstanding the Jews generally rejected the gospel, and made light of the invitation to the 'marriage feast,' some of them, it is well known, went in with the Gentiles, and were guests. But not all those that went in were fit subjects of the kingdom. There were some claiming to be Christ's disciples, who professed to cast out devils, and do many wonderful works in his

name, to whom he said, in the day of his coming to destroy the Jews, "I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matt. vii. 21—23. These, we think, were represented by the guest without the 'wedding garment.' He accepted the invitation to the feast, and mixed with the approved guests; and was detected, exposed and punished because he was not arrayed in the dress he should have worn at the feast. The order was given to the servants, to "bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." This was the fate which awaited all the Jews who rejected Jesus Christ. Matt. viii. 12. Luke xiii. 28. It was the fate of those represented by the *tares*, in the parable of the "tares of the field," Matt. xiii. 42; of the wicked, represented by the bad fish, which were took in the net, xiii. 50; of the unfaithful servant, Matt. xxiv. 51; and of the unprofitable servant, Matt. xxv. 30. In the opinion we have here expressed, that the man without the 'wedding garment' represented those Jews who had professed to embrace Christ, but were not worthy and faithful disciples, we coincide with Dr. Whitby, to whose observations, which here follow, we invite the attention of the reader. "That this man must represent the Jews is evident, 1st, Because he is *cast into outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth*, which Christ applies to the Jews, the sons of the kingdom, Matt. viii. 12, Luke xiii. 28, whilst the Gentiles are said to come to this supper. 2d, Because the reason assigned for this punishment is that *many are called, but few are chosen*, ver. 14, which language belongs peculiarly to the Jews. 3d, Christ said in the former chapter, that the *kingdom of God should be taken*

from them; and here proceeding to discourse of the same thing, as appears from the connective particle, ver. 1 of this chapter, he shews how worthy the Jews would be of this punishment, as being either wholly refractory to God, calling them by his Son to the participation of these blessings, or coming without due preparation, as the false apostles and deceitful workers did, or else by casting off that wedding garment they had once put on, as did those Jews whose charity waxed cold, Matt. xxiv. 10—12., and who being scandalized fell off from the Christian faith: it remains then that these backsliders, or these false apostles, must be the persons represented by the man not having on his wedding garment.”<sup>1</sup>

Previously to bringing the *notes* on this parable to a close, we wish to offer a few observations in illustration of the phrases “outer darkness,” and “weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth.” These expressions are found in the following passages, Matt. viii. 12, xiii. 42, 50, xxii. 13, xxiv. 51, xxv. 30. Luke xiii. 28, The expression “outer darkness,” is derived from the circumstances of Jewish weddings. The nuptial ceremonies took place at night. “Hence at those suppers the house of reception was filled with lights, called *dades*, *lampades*, *lukneia*, *phanoi*, torches, lamps, candles and lanterns, by Athenæus and Plutarch: so they who were admitted to the banquet, had the benefit of the light; but they who were shut out were in darkness, i. e. the darkness on the outside of the house, in which the guests were; which must have appeared more abundantly gloomy, when compared with the profusion of light *within* the guest chamber.”<sup>2</sup> The phrase *outer darkness* was derived

<sup>1</sup> Corn. note on Matt. xxii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary, on Matt. viii. 12.

from these circumstances ; and as those who were thrust out, were not only exposed to shame, but also to hunger and cold, it is said they wept and gnashed their teeth. These expressions have long been applied to the imagined misery of the damned in hell, in the future world. We have endeavored to give their primitive sense. They are a part of the parable, and are to be understood as representing the extreme misery of the Jews, excluded from the kingdom of the gospel, shut out from the *light* of truth, enveloped in the *darkness* of error, and suffering the tremendous misery brought upon them at the destruction of their city and nation. This is not only their primitive, but their *only* application. If this was the sense Jesus affixed to them, what right have the Doctors of the church to give them any other sense ? The parable now under consideration was completely fulfilled within fifty years after the Saviour's death ; and there is no reason that any part of it should be supposed to refer to the events of the future existence. The words of the great Teacher should be interpreted with the greatest caution ; their original meaning should be sought ; and when this is ascertained, it should not be put aside, or caused to share credence, with any *secondary* sense whatsoever. "Whoso readeth let him understand."

## Parable of the Ten Virgins.

MATTHEW XXV. 1—13.—LUKE XII. 35—37.

*“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut. Afterwards came also other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”*  
Matt. xxv. 1—13.

THIS parable refers to the same time and events which occupy the preceding chapter. The remark of Kenrick is very just: “The word *then* with which this parable begins, shows that our Lord is still speaking upon the same subject about which he had been discoursing in the last chapter, viz. the period of the destruction of Jerusalem.”<sup>1</sup> To the same purport is the comment of Bishop Pearce. “‘*Then shall the kingdom of heaven,*’ i. e. at that time, and under those circumstances. This shews,

<sup>1</sup> Exposition, on Matt. xxv. 1.

that Jesus, in this chapter, is speaking on the same subject as in the foregoing one, viz. what was to happen at the destruction of the Jewish state." And again, on ver. 13, the Bishop says, "this plainly shews, that what was said before in this chapter, relates to the destruction of the Jewish state, expressed by *the Son of man's coming*, as in chap. xvi. 27, 28."<sup>1</sup> On the connexion of the *twenty-fifth* with the *twenty-fourth* chapter we remark no further here, as it must be brought up again in the Notes on the parable of the Sheep and Goats.

The parable before us, is evidently drawn from the nuptial ceremonies of the eastern nations. It was a custom with them, for the bridegroom to repair, on the night of the marriage, with great pomp, to the house of the bride, accompanied by his attendants, for the purpose of receiving the nuptial benediction, and conducting the bride to his own mansion. "Four persons walked before him, carrying a canopy, supported by four poles, that if the bride intended to walk home to the bridegroom's house after the ceremony, she might walk under it in company with her husband."<sup>2</sup> On arriving at the residence of the bride, it was usual for her neighbors and friends, particularly *young women*, to welcome his approach, by going out to meet him with torches, or lamps in their hands. Lightfoot remarks<sup>3</sup> that they carried before them *ten* wooden staves, having each of them at top a vessel like a dish, in which was a piece of cloth or wick, dipped in oil, to give light to the company. "For this act of civility they were rewarded, if they came in time, with the honor of being admit-

<sup>1</sup> Commentary on Matt. xxv. 1 and 13.

<sup>2</sup> Brown's Antiq. of Jews, Part xi. sec. 2

<sup>3</sup> Heb. and Talm. Exer. on Matt. xxv. 1.

ted to the marriage feast, which was always held at night."<sup>1</sup> It will appear perfectly evident from this relation, that the parable is founded altogether on the events of an eastern marriage. There were ten virgins who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. Five are represented as having been wise, because they were prepared for the *coming* of the bridegroom; the other five were foolish, because they were not prepared. The cry was made at midnight, "go out to meet the bridegroom." The wise went out to receive him, and went in with him to the marriage; the foolish were excluded, because, not having *watched* for his approach, nor made ready for it, they did not arrive in season.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kenrick's Expos. Matt. xxv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> The following accounts of eastern weddings will be interesting to the reader, and serve to illustrate the parable before us. The first (see A. Clarke's Commentary on Matt. xxv. 6,) is taken from the Zend Avester, vol. ii. p. 558.

"On the day appointed for the marriage, about 5 o'clock in the evening, the bridegroom comes to the house of the bride, where the *mobed*, or priest, pronounces for the first time the nuptial benediction. He then brings her to his own house, gives her some refreshment, and afterwards the assembly of her relatives and friends, re-conduct her to her father's house. When she arrives, the *mobed* repeats the nuptial benediction, which is generally done about *midnight*; immediately after, the bride, accompanied with a part of her attending troop (the rest having returned to their own homes) is re-conducted to the house of her husband, where she generally arrives about three o'clock in the morning. Nothing can be more brilliant than these nuptial solemnities in India. Sometimes the assembly consists of not less than 2000 persons, all richly dressed in gold and silver tissue; the friends and relatives of the bride, encompassed with their domestics, are all mounted on horses richly harnessed. The goods, wardrobe, and even the bed of the bride are carried in triumph. The husband, richly mounted and magnificently dressed, is accompanied by his friends and relatives, the friends of the bride following him in covered carriages. At intervals during the procession guns and rockets are fired, and the spectacle is rendered grand

It will be hardly possible for the careful reader to mistake the true application of this parable. By consulting verse 13 he will perceive that Jesus himself made the application of it. In deducing the lesson he meant to enforce, he said, "WATCH, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour *wherein the Son of man cometh.*" Compare this with verse 42 of chap. xxiv. It is evident, that the design of the Saviour was to teach his followers *watchfulness*, in view of his coming to destroy the Jewish state.

The phrase 'kingdom of heaven,' should here be understood somewhat as the word 'church' is now generally used, viz. to signify the professed followers of Christ. They were represented by the virgins,—those who watched for their master's com-

beyond description, by a prodigious number of *lighted torches*, and by the sound of a multitude of musical instruments."

Mr. Ward has given the following description of a Hindoo wedding, which forms a striking parallel to the parable before us. "At a marriage, the procession of which I saw some years ago, the bridegroom came from a distance, and the bride lived at Serampore, to which place the bridegroom was to come by water. After waiting two or three hours, at length, near midnight, it was announced, as if in the very words of scripture, behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. All the persons employed now lighted their lamps, and ran with them in their hands to fill up their stations in the procession; some of them had lost their lights, and were unprepared, but it was then too late to seek them, and the cavalcade moved forward to the house of the bride, at which place the company entered a large and splendidly illuminated area, before the house, covered with an awning, where a great multitude of friends, dressed in their best apparel, were seated upon mats. The bridegroom was carried in the arms of a friend, and placed on a superb seat in the midst of the company, where he sat a short time, and then went into the house, the door of which was immediately shut, and guarded by sepoys. I and others expostulated with the door keepers, but in vain. Never was I so struck with our Lord's beautiful parable, as at this moment—'*and the door was shut.*'" Ward's view of the History, &c. of the Hindoos, vol. iii. pp. 171, 172.



ing by the wise virgins, and those who were regardless of that event by the foolish. Christians were too prone, like these virgins, to slumber. Paul, in writing to the Romans, endeavored to awake them. "It is high time to awake out of sleep." Rom. xiii. 11. Addressing the Thessalonians, the same apostle said, "For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. \* \* \* \* \* Therefore, let us not *sleep* as do others, but let us *watch* and be sober." 1 Thess. v. 2, 6. By the coming of the bridegroom in splendor, with his attendants, Jesus represented his own *coming*, in his glory, with his angels, or messengers, at the destruction of the Jews. As the wise virgins entered with the bridegroom to the marriage, so the watchful Christians entered into the enjoyment of all the blessings which accrued to the church from that signal destruction of its enemies which took place at the coming of Christ; and as the foolish virgins were excluded from the marriage, so the heedless, sleeping professors, who did not watch for their Lord, were excluded from the blessings which the watchful enjoyed, and were shut out in darkness and misery with the hypocritical Jews, the avowed enemies of Jesus Christ. Kenrick<sup>1</sup> will be found to confirm the views here advanced. Remarking on verse 13, he says, "These last words, as well as what the parable begins with, shew that it refers to the coming of Christ, for the destruction of Jerusalem, and not to his coming at the general judgment; for he concludes with the same exhortation which he had subjoined to the account which he gave, in the

<sup>1</sup> This author believed in a 'general judgment,' so called, in the future state, and applied the parable of the sheep and goats, Matt. xxv. 31—46 to that event.

former chapter, of the signs of his coming in that event: his language there was, ver. 42, 'watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.' The intention of the parable is to enforce the necessity of *watchfulness*, by showing the distinction which will be made in that day, between those by whom it was practised, and those by whom it was neglected. The wise virgins, who were prepared for the bridegroom when he came, and were admitted with him to the marriage feast, are sincere Christians, who by the constant practice of the duties of piety and virtue, would secure his favor, and being always prepared for his coming, would escape the judgments that were coming upon the Jewish nation. The foolish virgins, are those who profess themselves Christians, but want those substantial virtues which are necessary to recommend them to the favor of Christ, and, when he came, would be disowned and rejected by him, and suffered to perished with others.<sup>1</sup>

This is all it is necessary to say on this parable, in this place; since it will be brought forward again, in the course of the examination of Matt. xxv. 31—46.

<sup>1</sup> Exposition on Matt. xxv. 13.

## Parable of the Unfaithful Servant.

MATT. XXV. 14—30.—LUKE XIX. 11—27.

*“For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came, and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came, and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents besides them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came, and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said, unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gathered where I have not strewed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from*

*him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*"—Matt. xxv. 14—30.

DR. CAMPBELL remarks, "something (it is not said what) is here compared to a man who went abroad. This defect is supplied in the common version by these words—'*the kingdom of heaven is.*'" In my opinion it was originally, the SON OF MAN is."<sup>1</sup> This we regard as a very probable conjecture: or, at any rate, we are confident Jesus intended to represent himself by the 'man travelling into a far country.'

The different kinds of Christians, to whom different opportunities of doing good had been given, were represented by the several servants, on whom different degrees of treasure had been conferred.

The return of the master to reckon with his servants, represents the *coming* of Christ, at the destruction of Jerusalem, to reward the faithful and punish the slothful members of his church.

The improvement made by the faithful servants of the means placed in their hands, and the slothfulness of him who hid his talent in the earth, represent the different kinds of conduct pursued by the professing Christians, some of them making a wise use of the advantages they enjoyed, and others indulging in sloth and disobedience.

The righteous retribution with which Jesus visited both faithful and unfaithful professors, is displayed in the manner the servants were dealt with on the return of their master.

A few remarks on the particular design of Christ

<sup>1</sup> Note on Matt. xxv. 14.

in uttering this parable, and such observations as will tend to present the different features of it in the most striking manner, is all that is necessary to be said in this place ; since it will be brought forward again, in the consideration of the succeeding parable.

To enforce the duty of *faithfulness* was the particular object which Jesus had in view, as he had enjoined that of *watchfulness* in the parable of the virgins. Christians were not allowed to plead that they had enjoyed but few advantages, and that it was, therefore, excusable in them if they were not prepared for the coming of their Lord. Nothing more would be required of them than what they actually had the power to do. He who had gained but *two* talents was equally praised and rewarded with him who had gained *five*, because he had done equally as well, considering the means which had been put into his hands. But he to whom *one* talent was given, had not gained any thing ; he was slothful and faithless ; he had hid his talent in the earth ; and to add to his wickedness, he sought to excuse himself by accusing his master. 'To him that hath,' i. e., *hath much*, 'shall be given,' saith the Saviour, 'and from him that hath not,' i. e., *hath but little*, 'shall be taken even that which he hath.' The evident meaning here is, the disciple who has many advantages, and improves them well, will receive still more ; but he that has few advantages, and neglects to improve them, shall lose the little which he possesses.

The master of the servants is described as returning *after a long time*. It is certain that the Christians grew impatient in expecting the coming of Christ. The evil servant, Matt. xxiv. 48, is represented as saying, "my lord *delayeth* his coming."

The ten virgins all slumbered and slept while the bridegroom tarried. Paul, 2 Thess. iii. 5, recommends "the *patient* waiting for Christ." James saith, chap. v. 7, 8, "Be *patient*, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; *for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*" Under the grievous persecutions which they suffered from the Jews, and which they had been promised should expire at the coming of Christ, it is not strange that they should become impatient; and while James bids them wait patiently for the event, he assures them it is drawing nigh; and the whole strain of his language implies that they would live to see the event.

**Parable of the Sheep and Goats.**

MATT. XXV. 31—46.

*“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”*

WE have now approached a parable, that, for many ages, by the almost universal consent of the Christian church, has been applied to the events which it is supposed will take place at the end of time, and in the future state of existence. Notwithstanding it has been thus generally misinterpreted, the meaning is certainly plain; and the reader would be infallibly led to it by the context, were his mind not diverted by prejudice from the strain of the Saviour's reasoning, and were he to exercise a due degree of caution in the investigation. With a proper deference to the general opinion of divines and commentators, we shall proceed with care, assuming nothing which is not evident, nor asserting what we do not prove.

At the very commencement of the parable, the Saviour informs us, when those things of which he spake were to take place. See verse 31. "*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of glory,*" &c. &c. Let the reader now be careful to observe, that all which is predicted in this parable was to be fulfilled, *at the coming of the Son of man in his glory*. The only inquiry, therefore, necessary to make, in order to ascertain when the events of this parable took place, is this—*when did the Son of man come in his glory?*

In the first place, see Matt. xvi. 27, 28, "*For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*" This must be the same coming of the Son of man, mentioned in the text. In both instances it is a *glorious* coming; in both the Son of man is accompanied with angels; and in



both, he comes to reward men according to their works. There is no room for doubt, that it is the same event which is spoken of in both these passages. Now notice particularly that the Saviour says, "*there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*" To "taste of death," is a Hebraism, signifying *to die*; and hence the meaning of this passage is, *there be some standing here which shall not die, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.* Here it is evident beyond possibility of mistake, that the coming of the Son of man was to take place, during the natural lives of some of those who stood near him at the time he uttered these words. Whenever the evangelists give an account of this conversation of our Lord with his disciples, as to the subject under consideration, they give it precisely in the same manner. See Mark viii. 38, ix. 1, "*Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels. And he said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.*" See, also, Luke ix. 26, 27, "*For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels. But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till [they see the kingdom of God.]*" Here, in each instance, the evangelists have recorded the explicit assurance of Jesus, that his coming to judge and recompense men according to their works would take place, while some of those people lived who stood near him when he

spake. What can be more plain than this subject?

On other occasions, Jesus embraced opportunities to impress upon the minds of his disciples, the same fact with respect to the coming of the Son of man. And in one particular instance, he pointed out John, his beloved disciple, as a person who should live until his coming took place. The account of this is recorded in John xxi. 21—23. “Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, *if I will that he tarry till I come*, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, he shall not die; but *if I will that he tarry till I come*, what is that to thee?” Agreeably to this account, John lived until after the destruction of Jerusalem. Again, in Matt. x. 23, we have the following words: “But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, *ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come*,” Here is an unconditional assurance from the lips of the Saviour, that, pursued by their angry persecutors, the disciples would not traverse all the cities of Israel, before the coming of the Son of man took place. Now, as every thing predicted in the parable was to be fulfilled at the time of the coming of the Son of man, why ought it to be applied to a day of judgment in the future state? Is not the fulfillment confined by the words of the Great Teacher, to time long ago passed by?

But there are other means by which to ascertain to what time the Saviour alluded in the parable before us. We must consult the connexion in which it is found. This, however, is not done because it is thought there is any thing invalid in the explana-

tion and proofs already offered. But as there may be a multitude of proofs brought forward on this interesting question, we wish to make the reader acquainted with a fair proportion of them.

Let it then be understood, that the 24th and 25th chapters of Matthew are one discourse, unbroken by any thing but the division into chapters and verses. This division is comparatively a modern invention, carried into effect by uninspired men. It is, in some respects, very useful. By the help of it, we are enabled to point out a particular sentence, phrase, or word in any book, refering to the chapter and verse in which it may be found; and this we could not conveniently do, without the aid of this division. And it is pre-eminently useful in the construction of Concordances to the scriptures. Cardinal Hugo, we think, has the credit of being one of the earliest projectors of the division. While we bear testimony to the general utility of it, we still believe that the division is, in some places, made where it ought not to be; but where, on the contrary, the closest connexion ought to have been preserved. That the 25th chapter of Matthew is a continuation of the subject commenced in the 24th, is evident from the first verse, and even from the first *word* of it. "*Then* shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins." Here it is evident the Saviour was refering to time of which he had before spoken, and that the things he was about to describe were to take place at the same time. If not, why is *then*, the abverb of time, used? Let us go back, and examine the context.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Pearce, in his Commentary, has maintained, at some length, that the subject of the destruction of Jerusalem is continued through the *twenty-fifth* chapter. Here follow his Notes on several verses of that chapter. Verse 1. "*Then shall the kingdom, &c.*"

While Jesus was in the temple, he uttered a malediction upon the Scribes and Pharisees. "Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes ; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify ; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city : that upon you may come all the righteous

This shews that Jesus, in this chapter, is speaking on the same subject as in the foregoing one, viz. what was to happen at the destruction of the Jewish state." Verse 13. "*Wherein the Son of man cometh.* This plainly shews that what was said before in this chapter, relates to the destruction of the Jewish state, expressed by the *Son of man's coming*, as in chapter xvi. 27, 28." Verse 15. "*According to his several ability.* The moral of this parable is, that Jesus would reward or punish Christians according to their behaviour under the means of grace afforded to them ; and that from every one would be required in proportion to what had been given to him. And this distinction, made between them, was to be made at the time when the Jewish state was to be destroyed." Verse 31. "*Shall come in his glory*, i. e. to destroy the Jewish state. See chapter xvi. 27, 28. xxiv. 30. xxvi. 64. Jesus is still giving an account of what distinction will then be made between good and bad Christians." Verse 34. "*The King*, i. e. the Son of man then in his kingdom. See ch. xvi. 28."

After all this, when the Bishop comes to verses 41 and 46, he thinks Jesus had the day of general judgment *in his thoughts*. Bp. Pearce had that ideal judgment in *his thoughts* ; and although he got nearly through the whole account with a correct interpretation, his religious opinions got the advantage of his reason at last.

Arch Bp. Newcome was confident that the subject of the destruction of Jerusalem extended into the *twenty-fifth* chapter. See Newcome's Observations, note *in loco*.

Adam Clarke was determined to be right. He made the *twenty-fifth* chapter refer to both events, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the judgment in eternity. And when he comes to the 31st verse, he most solemnly assures his readers, without giving them a particle of proof, that "this must be understood of Christ's coming at the *last day*, to judge mankind : though all the preceding part of the chapter may be applied *also* to the destruction of Jerusalem."

The above Notes are not quoted from these authors because we have the least doubts of the correctness of the exposition here given, but to shew what they felt themselves obliged to acknowledge, with all their prepossessions.

blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar." And the Saviour was particular to say in addition, "Verily I say unto you, *all these things shall come upon this generation.* Matt. xxiii. 34—36.

Shortly after this, Jesus "departed from the temple;" and, as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, tell us *when shall these things be?* and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Matt. xxiv. 3. When shall *what* things be? The answer is contained in the *second* verse. "And Jesus said unto them, see ye not *all these things?*" Now another question arises, see ye not all *what* things? Jesus had given indications of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, particularly of the temple. The disciples pointed out to him *the buildings of the temple*, with all their strength and magnificence. "Jesus said unto them, see ye not all *these* things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Strong and magnificent as this temple is, it shall be levelled with the dust. "When shall *these things* be?" inquired the prying disciples, "and what shall be the sign of *thy coming*, and of the end of the world?" By the *end of the world*, the disciples meant the end of the Jewish age. The expression in the original, signifies—of the end of the age. A great proportion of the most respectable translators and commentators render this passage in this manner.<sup>1</sup> But the word *world* may be re-

<sup>1</sup> At the head of these I place the renowned Dr. Campbell. He renders the expression, "the conclusion of this state," meaning the Jewish state. See his Notes on Matt. xiii. 39. xxiv. 3.

Adam Clarke renders the expression, "*end of the age.*" Ken-

tained, if the same sense is given to it here which it bears in other parts of the New Testament. For instance, in Heb. ix. 26, "But now once in *the end of the world*," or rather *worlds, ages*, "hath he (Christ) appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Christ appeared at the conclusion of the age under the law, and it was to the end of this age that the disciples had reference in their private question to the Saviour. Again, see 1 Cor. x. 11, "Now, all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the *worlds, or ages*, are come." The ends of the ages had then already come. We are to understand the disciples as inquiring, "what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the *end of the age*."

Having ascertained the true sense of the disciples' question, let us observe particularly the Saviour's answer to it; taking care to observe that throughout his reply he keeps prominently in view, *his coming*, and THE END of the Mosaic age, concerning which they inquired.

The *first sign of his coming* which Jesus pointed out was this: "Many shall come in my name saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many." Matt. xxiv. 5, 11. Comp. Mark xiii. 5, 6. Luke xxi. 8. "These false Christs began to appear soon after our Lord's death, but they multiplied as the national calamities increased. Josephus informs us, that there were many who pretended to divine inspira-

rick, in his Exposition, says "the end of the age;" and observes that the expression was synonymous to the coming of Christ. Wakefield renders it, "the end of the age;" as do also the Authors of the Improved Version; Bp. Pearce, on Matt. xiii. 40; Whitby on Matt. xii. 32, and Dr. Hammond on the same passage, with many more who might be named.

tion deceived the people, leading out numbers of them into the desert. He does not indeed expressly say that they called themselves the *Messiah* or Christ: yet he says that which is equivalent, viz: that they pretended that God would there show them the signs of liberty, meaning redemption from the Roman yoke, which the Jews expected the Messiah would do for them, (compare Luke xxiv. 21.) Josephus further adds, that an Egyptian false prophet led thirty thousand men into the desert, who were almost entirely cut off by Felix the Roman Procurator.<sup>1</sup> The same historian relates that in the reign of Claudius, "the land was overrun with magicians, seducers, and imposters, who drew the people after them in multitudes into solitudes and deserts, to see the signs and miracles which they promised to show by the power of God."<sup>2</sup> Felix, and afterwards Festus, governors of Judea, judging these proceedings to be the commencement of rebellion against the Romans, continually sent out detachments of soldiers, and destroyed great numbers of the deluded populace. Among these imposters were Dositheus the Samaritan, who affirmed that he was the Christ foretold by Moses; Simon Magus, who said that he appeared among the Jews as the Son of God; and Theudas, who pretending to be a prophet, persuaded many of the people to take their goods and follow him to the river Jordan, declaring that he was divinely commissioned, and that at his command the waters would be divided, and give them a safe passage to the opposite side.<sup>3</sup> Many other examples of pretended Messiahs might be adduced; but

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, de Bell. Jud. lib. 2 c. 13. sec. 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, Ant. Jud. lib. 20. c. 8, sec. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. lib. 20, c. 4, (al. 5) sec. 1.

the preceding are sufficient to establish the truth of our Lord's prediction."<sup>1</sup>—*Horne's Intro. i. 615.*

Jesus points out the *second sign of his coming* in the following words: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but THE END (of the Mosaic age) is not yet." Matt. xxiv. 6. Mark xiii. 7. Luke xxi. 9. "These wars and commotions were as the distant thunder, that forebodes approaching storms. Previous to the destruction of Jerusalem, the greatest agitation prevailed in the Roman empire, and the struggle for succession to the imperial throne was attended by severe and bloody conflicts. Four emperors, Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, suffered violent deaths within the short space of eighteen months. The emperor Caligula commanded the Jews to place his statue in their temple; and in consequence of a positive refusal to comply with so impious a request, he threatened them with an invasion, which was prevented by his death.<sup>2</sup> Jesus Christ added. *See that ye* (my disciples) *be not troubled*, as the Jews will be, expecting the approaching destruction of their nation; *but the end is not yet*: these events, alarming as they seemed, were only the preludes to the dreadful and tumultuous scenes that followed."—*Horne's Intro. i. 615.*

Jesus continues to say, "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." Matt. xxiv. 7. Mark xiii. 8. Luke xxi. 10. "In

<sup>1</sup> In the Rev. David Simpson's Key to the Prophecies there is an instructive History of *twenty-four* false Messiahs, who deluded the Jews between the time of the Emperor Adrian and the year of Christ 1682. See pp. 133—148.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, Antiq. lib. 18. c. 8. (al. 9.) De Bell. Jud. lib. 2. c. 10.



this prediction Christ declares that greater disturbances than those which happened under Caligula would take place in the latter part of Claudius's reign, and during that of Nero. The rising of *nation against nation* portended the dissensions, insurrections, and mutual slaughter of the Jews, and those of other nations, who dwelt in the same cities together; as particularly at Cæsarea,<sup>1</sup> where the Jews and Syrians contended about the right of the city, which contention at length proceeded so far, that above twenty thousand Jews were slain, and the city was cleared of the Jewish inhabitants. At this blow the<sup>2</sup> whole nation of the Jews were exasperated, and dividing themselves into parties, they burnt and plundered the neighbouring cities of the Syrians, and made an immense slaughter of the people. The Syrians in revenge destroyed not a less number of the Jews, and every city, as<sup>3</sup> Josephus expresses it, was divided into two armies. At Scythopolis<sup>4</sup> the inhabitants compelled the Jews who resided among them to fight against their own countrymen; and after the victory, basely setting upon them by night, they murdered above thirteen thousand of them, and spoiled their goods. At Ascalon<sup>5</sup> they killed two thousand five hundred, at Ptolemais two thousand, and made not a few prisoners. The Tyrians put many to death and imprisoned more. The people of Gadara did likewise, and all the other cities of Syria, in proportion as they hated or feared the Jews. At Alexandria<sup>6</sup> the old enmity was revived between the Jews and

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, Antiq. lib. 20. cap. 7. sec. 7 &c. De Bell. Jud. lib. 2. c. 13. sec. 7. c. 18. sec. 1. edit. Hudson.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. c. 18. sec. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. sec. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. sec. 3. Vita Joseph. sec. 6.

<sup>5</sup> De Bell. Jud. lib. 2. c. 18. sec. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. sec. 7. et 8.

Heathens, and many fell on both sides, to the number of fifty thousand. The people of Damascus<sup>1</sup> too conspired against the Jews of the same city, and assaulting them unarmed, killed ten thousand of them. The rising of *kingdom against kingdom* portended the open wars of different tetrarchies and provinces against one another; as<sup>2</sup> that of the Jews who dwelt in Peræa against the people of Philadelphia concerning their bounds, while Cuspius Fadus was procurator: and<sup>3</sup> that of the Jews and Galilæans against the Samaritans, for the murder of some Galilæans going up to the feast of Jerusalem, while Cumanus was procurator; and<sup>4</sup> that of the whole nation of the Jews against the Romans and Agrippa and other allies of the Roman empire, which began while Gessius Florus was procurator. But as Josephus says,<sup>5</sup> there was not only sedition and civil war throughout Judea, but likewise in Italy, Otho and Vitellius contending for the empire.'—*Horne's Intro. i.* 615, 616.

The *third sign of his coming* which Jesus pointed out, was that of famines and pestilences. "There shall be famines and pestilences." Matt. xxiv. 7. Mark xiii. 8. Luke xxi. 10.

"There was a famine predicted by Agabus (Acts xi. 28,) which is mentioned by Suetonius, Tacitus and Eusebius<sup>6</sup> and *which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar*; and was so severe at Jerusalem, that (Josephus informs us) many people perished for want of food.<sup>7</sup> *Pestilences* are the usual

<sup>1</sup> De Bell. Jud. chap. 20. sec. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. 20. c. 1. sec. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. c. 5. De Bell. Jud. lib. 2. c. 12. sec. 3. &c.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. c. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. lib. 4. c. 9. sec. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Suetonius, in Claudio, c. 18. Taciti Annales, lib. 12. c. 43. Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. c. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Antiq. lib. 20. c. 2. sec. 5. (al. 6.)

attendants of famines, as scarcity and badness of provisions almost always terminate in some epidemical distemper. That Judæa was afflicted with pestilence we learn from Josephus; who says that, when one Niger was put to death by the Jewish zealots, besides other calamities, he imprecated famine and *pestilence* upon them, "all which imprecations God confirmed against these impious men."<sup>1</sup>—*Horne's Intro. i. 616.*

The *fourth sign of his coming* which Jesus pointed out, was *earthquakes*. Matt. xxiv. 7. Mark xiii. 8. Luke xxi. 11.

"*Earthquakes* in prophetic language mean commotions and popular insurrections: if these be intended, they have already been noticed under the second sign; but if we understand this prophecy, *literally*, of tremors or convulsions of the earth, many such occurred at the times to which our Lord referred; particularly one at Crete, in the reign of Claudius, and others at Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos and other places, in all of which Jews were settled.<sup>2</sup> Tacitus mentions one at Rome in the same reign, and says, that in the reign of Nero, the cities of Laodicæa, Hierapolis, and Colosse were overthrown; and that the celebrated city of Pompeii in Campania was overthrown,<sup>3</sup> and almost demolished, by an earthquake.<sup>4</sup> And another earthquake at Rome is mentioned by Suetonius as having happened in the reign of Galba."<sup>5</sup>—*Horne's Intro. i. 616, 617.*

<sup>1</sup> De Bell. Jud. lib. 4. c. 6. sec. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Philostratus, in Vita Apollonii, lib. 4. c. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Taciti Annales, lib. 14. c. 27.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. lib. 15. c. 22. This earthquake is mentioned by Seneca Nat. Quæst. lib. 6. c. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Suetonius, in Galba, c. 18.

The *fifth sign of his coming* which Jesus pointed out, was fearful sights and signs from heaven. "Fearful sights and great signs, shall there be from heaven." Luke xxi. 11. The fulfilment of this prophecy, in the most minute and astonishing manner, is recorded by *profane* historians.

"Many prodigies are related by Josephus; particularly that, in Judea, at the commencement of the war, and before the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, "there broke out a prodigious storm in the night, with the utmost violence and very strong winds, with the largest showers of rain, with continual lightnings, terrible thunderings, and amazing concussions and bellowings of the earth that was in an earthquake. These things were a manifest indication, that some destruction was coming upon men, when the system of this world was thrown into such a disorder; and any one would guess that these wonders portended some grand calamities that were impending."<sup>1</sup> The same historian, in the preface<sup>2</sup> to his history of the Jewish war, undertakes to record the signs and prodigies that preceded it: and accordingly in his sixth book<sup>3</sup> he enumerates them, thus ;—1. A star hung over the city like a sword, and the comet continued for a whole year. 2. The people being assembled to celebrate the feast of unleavened bread, at the ninth hour of the night there shone so great a light about the altar and the temple, that it seemed to be bright day, and this continued for half an hour. 3. At the same feast a cow, led by the priest to sacrifice, brought forth a lamb, in the middle of the temple. 4. The eastern gate of the temple, which was of solid brass and very

<sup>1</sup> De Bell. Jud. lib. 4. c. 4. sec. 5.

<sup>2</sup> De Bell. Jud. sec. 11

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. lib. 6. c. 5. sec. 3.

heavy, and was scarcely shut in an evening by twenty men, and was fastened by strong bars and bolts, was seen at the sixth hour of the night opened of its own accord, and could hardly be shut again. 5. Before the setting of the sun there were seen all over the country chariots and armies fighting in the clouds, and beseiging cities. 6. At the feast of Pentecost, as the priests were going into the inner temple by night as usual to attend their service, they heard first a motion and noise, and then a voice as of a multitude, saying, *Let us depart hence.* 7. What Josephus reckons as the most horrible of all, one Jesus, an ordinary fellow, four years before the war began, and when the city was in peace and plenty, came to the feast of tabernacles, and ran crying up and down the streets day and night, '*A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the temple, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, a voice against all the people.*' The magistrates endeavored by stripes and torture to restrain him; but he still cried with a mournful voice, '*Woe, woe to Jerusalem!*' This he continued to do for seven years and five months together, and especially at the great festivals; and he neither grew hoarse, nor was tired; but went about the walls and cried with a loud voice, '*Woe, woe to the city, and to the temple;*' and as he added at last, '*Woe, woe, also to myself,*' it happened that a stone from some sling or engine immediately struck him dead. These were indeed *fearful signs and great sights from heaven*: and there is not a more creditable historian than the author who relates them, and who appeals to the testimony of those who heard them.<sup>1</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Milman has admirably wrought up these portentous signs, in his Poem on the Fall of Jerusalem, pp. 106—114.

it may add some weight to his relation, that Tacitus, the Roman historian, also gives us a summary account of the same occurrences. He says,<sup>1</sup> that there happened several prodigies, armies were seen engaging in the heavens, arms were seen glittering, and the temple shone with the sudden fire of the clouds, the doors of the temple opened suddenly, and a voice greater than human was heard, that the gods were departing, and likewise a great motion of their departing. Dr. Jortin's remark is very pertinent, If Christ had not expressly foretold this, many who gave little heed to portents, and who know that historians have been too credulous in that point, would have suspected that Josephus exaggerated, and that Tacitus was misinformed: but as the testimonies of Josephus and Tacitus confirm the predictions of Christ, so the predictions of Christ confirm the wonders recorded by these historians.<sup>2</sup>—*Horne's Intro.* i. 617.

The *sixth sign of his coming* which Jesus pointed out, was the persecution of the Christians. Matt. xxiv. 9, 10. Mark xiii. 9. Luke xxi. 12. This prophecy was fulfilled to the letter.

“Previously to the other prognostics of the destruction of Jerusalem, the disciples of Jesus Christ were taught to expect the hardships of persecution: and how exactly this prediction was accomplished we may read in the Acts of the Apostles. There we find that some were *delivered to councils*, as Peter and John. (iv. 5. &c.) Some were *brought before rulers and kings*, as Paul before Gallio

<sup>1</sup> Evenerant prodigia—Visæ per cælum concurrere acies, rutilantia arma, et subito nubium igne collucere templum. Expasæ repente delubri fores, et audita major humana vox, *Excedere Deos*. Simul ingens motus excedentium. Tacit. Hist. lib. 5. c. 13. p. 217. edit. Lipsii.

<sup>2</sup> Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. p. 41.

(xviii. 12.), Felix (xxiv.), Festus and Agrippa (xxv.) Some had a mouth and wisdom which all their adversaries were not able to gainsay nor resist, as it is said of Stephen (vi. 10.), that they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake, and Paul made even Felix to tremble (xxiv. 25.) and the gospel still prevailed against all opposition and persecution whatever. Some were imprisoned, as Peter and John (iv. 4.) Some were beaten, as Paul and Silas, (xvi. 23.) Some were put to death, as Stephen (vii. 59.), and James the brother of John, (xii. 2.) But if we would look farther, we have a more melancholy proof of the truth of this prediction, in the persecutions under Nero, in which (besides numberless other Christians) fell those<sup>1</sup> two great champions of our faith, St. Peter and St. Paul. And it was *nominis prælium*, as Tertullian<sup>2</sup> terms it; it was a war against the very name. Though a man was possessed of every human virtue, yet it was crime enough if he was a *Christian*: so true were our Saviour's words, that they should be hated of all nations for his name's sake. Hence arose that common saying among the heathens—*Vor bonus Caius Sejus: tanquam modo quod Christianus*:—Caius Sejus is a good man, only he is a Christian.”—*Horne's Intro. i. 618.*

The seventh sign of his coming which Jesus pointed out, was the preaching of the gospel throughout the then known world. See Matt. xxiv. 13, 14. “But he that shall endure (in despite of these persecutions) unto THE END, (of the Mosaic age) shall be saved,” i. e. from the evils coming on the Jews. “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall THE END come,” viz. the end of the Mo-

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. 2. c. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Tertull. Apol. c. 2. p. 4. edit. Rigaltii. Paris, 1675.

saic age. "Accordingly his religion was very widely propagated before the destruction of Jerusalem; as we learn from the history of the apostles, which, in St. Luke's continuation of it, ends about seven years before the event referred to. Such expressions as in *all the world*, and *among all nations*, are not to be understood strictly. Learned men have involved themselves in needless and inextricable difficulties by rigorously interpreting popular language. A very extensive preaching of Christ is sufficient to fulfil the prediction. To this St. Paul appeals as a known fact: "Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound has gone into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." Rom. x. 18. "The gospel is come unto you (Collossians) as it is in all the world." Col. i. 6. "It has been preached to every creature under heaven." Col. i. 23. The epistles now extant were addressed to Christians at Rome, and in various parts of Greece and Asia."—*Newcome's Observations*, 193, 194.

We have thus noticed the signs of the coming of Christ, which he himself pointed out, and have seen that they all appeared previously to the destruction of Jerusalem, at the end of the Mosaic age. Having faithfully forewarned his followers of the judgments which were soon to fall upon his enemies, Jesus, in the next place, proceeds to give them directions in what way they shall best escape the threatening calamities. "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet (chap. ix. and xi.) stand in the holy place;" i. e. when ye see the Roman armies encamping in Judea, the holy land; "then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." Matt. xxiv. 15, 16.

"As all these mountainous countries remained



in obedience to the Romans, those who fled into them were safe. In the twelfth year of Nero, Josephus informs us that Cestius Gallus, the president of Syria, came with a powerful army against Jerusalem, which he might have assaulted and taken : but without any just reason, and contrary to the expectation of all, he raised the siege and departed. Immediately after his retreat, "many of the principal Jewish people forsook the city, as men do a sinking ship."<sup>1</sup> And a few years afterwards, when Vespasian was drawing his forces towards Jerusalem, a great multitude fled from Jericho into the *mountainous country* for their security.<sup>2</sup> Among these it is probable that there were some Christians ; but we learn more certainly from ecclesiastical historians,<sup>3</sup> that, at this juncture, all who believed in Jesus Christ, warned by this *oracle* or prophecy, quitted Jerusalem, and removed to Pella, and other places beyond the river Jordan : and thus marvelously escaped the general shipwreck of their country : for we do not read any where that so much as one Christian perished in the siege of Jerusalem."—*Horne's Intro.* i. 619.

"Let him which is on the house top not come down to take any thing out of his house." Ver. 17. The houses of the Jews, as well as those of the ancient Greeks and Romans, were flat on the top for them to walk upon, and had usually stairs on the outside, by which they might ascend and descend without coming into the house. In the eastern walled cities these flat roofed houses, usually formed continued terraces from one end of the city to

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, de Bell. Jud. lib. 2. c. 19. sec. 6. c. 20. sec. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. lib. 4. c. 8. sec. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. lib, 3. c. 6. Epiphanius adversus Nazæos, lib. i. sec. 7.

the other, which terraces terminated at the gates. He therefore who is walking and regaling himself upon the house top, let him not come down to take any thing out of his house; but let him instantly pursue his course, along the tops of the houses, and escape out of the city gate as fast as he possibly can.<sup>1</sup> "Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes," ver. 18. Circumstances would render it necessary that their flight should be sudden and hasty as Lot's was out of Sodom. "Woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days." Verse 19. The melancholy force of this premonition, has been felt by every one who has read the account given by Josephus of the calamities of Jewish mothers, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. "But pray ye that your flight (from the city into the mountainous country) be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day." Ver. 20. Travelling in the winter would, of course, be more difficult than any other time, from the hardness of the season, the badness of the roads, and the shortness of the days; and on the Sabbath day, it was unlawful to travel any considerable distance, a Sabbath day's journey among the Jews being but about a mile. After having forewarned his followers to flee from Judca, Jesus gives them the reason why they should go. "For then shall be great tribulation (in the holy land) such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Verse 21. Compare Ezek. v. 9. Dan. xii. 1. Joel ii. 2. Josephus uses very similar language in describing the misery of the Jews. To shew the extreme rigor of the calamities, Jesus asserted, that if this time of trouble was of long continuance, all would

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Newton, on the Prophecies, Dis. xix. p. 2.

have been cut off. "And except those days should be shortened, no flesh should be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Verse 22. "The elect" is a phrase used to signify those whom God had chosen to believe in Christ in that age, who are spoken of again in ver. 24. The Saviour then proceeded to shew, 23—26, that even during the calamities, false Christs and prophets would arise, and pretend to do great wonders, leading the people into deserts and secret places. To these Jesus bids his followers not give heed. The coming of Christ would not be secret, but open; the displays of divine justice would be evident, as lightning, "which cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west"—thus was the coming of the Son of man to be. 27. The coming of Christ to destroy the Jews took place in the approach of the Roman armies to Jerusalem; none need go into secret places to find it, they would see it in the city; for "wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." Verse 28. The carcass was in the city, and thither would the Romans repair.

After having thus described the *tribulation* about to come on Judea, by which the destruction of the city was to be preceded, and given his followers the necessary directions by observing which they might escape it, Jesus proceeds to say, "*Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened; and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall*

send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet. and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Verse 29—31. This language is couched in the strong eastern manner. It is not, of course, to be understood literally; but was designed to show that the high powers of the Jewish nation would be overthrown at the coming of Christ. "The Hebrew poets, to express happiness, prosperity, the instauration and advancement of states, kingdoms and potentates, make use of images taken from the most striking parts of nature, from the heavenly bodies, from the sun, moon and stars; which they describe as shining with increased splendor, and never setting; the moon becomes like the meridian sun, and the sun's light is augmented seven fold: see Isaiah xxx. 26, new heavens and a new earth are created, and a brighter age commences. On the contrary the overthrow and destruction of kingdoms, is represented by opposite images: the stars are obscured, the moon withdraws her light, and the sun shines no more; the earth quakes, and the heavens tremble; and all things seem tending to their original chaos."<sup>1</sup> Arch Bishop Newcome says, on Matt. xxiv. 29, "the style here is very eastern, and imports that the Jewish rulers, and their church and nation, should be involved in ruin: and that this should be effected soon after the commencement of the troubles alluded to; or in a time which, considering the difficulties of the undertaking, might properly be called short. It is the language of prophecy, to which the Jews were accustomed."<sup>2</sup> Bishop Newton, on the same passage, remarks, "commentators generally understand [i.

<sup>1</sup> Lowth on Isaiah, note on xiii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Observations, chap. iii. sec. 1.

e. at the time the Bp. wrote] this and what follows of the end of the world, and of Christ's coming to judgment; but the words '*immediately after the tribulation of those days*,' show evidently that he is not speaking of any distant event, but of something immediately consequent upon the tribulation before mentioned, and that must be the destruction of Jerusalem. It is true, his figures are very strong, but no stronger than are used by the ancient prophets upon similar occasions."<sup>1</sup> The following extracts from the works of Dr. Warburton confirm what is said by the writers already quoted. "The prophecy of Jesus, concerning the approaching destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, is conceived in such high and swelling terms, that not only the modern interpreters, but the ancient likewise, have supposed, that our Lord interweaves it into a direct prediction of his second coming to judgment. Hence arose a current opinion in *those* times, that the consummation of all things was at hand; which hath afforded a handle to an infidel objection in *these*, insinuating that Jesus, in order to keep his followers attached to his service, and patient under sufferings, flattered them with the near approach of those rewards, which completed all their views and expectations. To which, the defenders of religion have opposed this answer, That the distinction of short and long, in the duration of time, is lost in eternity, and with the Almighty; *a thousand years are but as yesterday*, &c.

"But the principle both go upon is false; and if what hath been said be duly weighed, it will appear, that this prophecy doth not respect Christ's *second* coming to judgment, but his *first*; in the abolition of the Jewish policy, and the establishment of

<sup>1</sup> Dissertations on the Prophecies, chap. xx. part 3.

the Christian ; That kingdom of Christ, which commenced on the total ceasing of the theocracy. For as God's reign over the Jews entirely ended with the abolition of the temple-service, so the reign of Christ, *in spirit and in truth*, had then its first beginning.

“ This was the true *establishment* of Christianity, not that effected by the donations or conversions of Constantine. Till the Jewish law was abolished, over which the *Father* presided as king, the reign of the *Son* could not take place ; because the sovereignty of Christ over mankind, was that very sovereignty of God over the Jews, transferred, and more largely extended.

“ This therefore being one of the most important æras in the œconomy of grace, and the most awful revolution in all God's religious dispensations ; we see the elegance and propriety of the terms in question, to denote so great an event, together with the destruction of Jerusalem, by which it was effected : for in the old prophetic language the change and fall of principalities and powers, whether spiritual or civil, are signified by the shaking heaven and earth, the darkening the sun and moon and the falling of the stars ; as the rise and establishment of new ones are by processions in the clouds of heaven, by the sound of trumpet, and the assembling together of hosts and congregations.”<sup>1</sup>

This language, as he observes<sup>2</sup> in another place, was borrowed from the ancient hieroglyphics: “ For as in the hieroglyphic writing the sun, moon, and stars were used to represent states and empires, kings, queens, and nobility ; their eclipse and extinction, temporary disasters, or entire overthrow, &c so in like manner the holy prophets call

<sup>1</sup> Warburton's Julian, book 1. chap. 1. p. 21. &c. 2d edit.

<sup>2</sup> Divine Legation, vol. 2, book 4, sec. 4.

kings and empires by the names of the heavenly luminaries; their misfortunes and overthrow are represented by eclipses and extinction; stars falling from the firmament are employed to denote the destruction of the nobility, &c. In a word, the prophetic style seems to be a speaking hieroglyphic. These observations will not only assist us in the study of the Old and New Testament, but likewise vindicate their character from the illiterate cavils of modern libertines, who have foolishly mistaken *that* for the peculiar workmanship of the prophet's heated imagination, which was the sober established language of their times, and which God and his Son condescended to employ as the properest conveyance of the high mysterious ways of Providence in the revelation of themselves to mankind."<sup>1</sup>

"See now verses 30, 31. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." This language, highly figurative, is designed to show, that at the time spoken of, viz. "immediately after the tribulation of those days," there should be a remarkable interposition of Providence, in favor of the church, when the tribes of the *lana*<sup>2</sup> would mourn, and the followers of Christ

<sup>1</sup> To show that this kind of language was familiar to the Jewish prophets, we refer to the following passages. Job xxx. 28. Eccles. xii. 2. Isaiah xiii. 10, xxiv. 23. xxxiv. 4. lx. 20. Jer. iv. 23. xv. 9. Exk. xxxii. 7, 8. Dan. viii. 10. Joel ii. 10, 28—32, comp. Acts ii. 16—21. Ainos v. 20 and viii. 9. The new Testament writers copied the same language. Acts ii. 16—21. 2 Peter iii. 10—12. Rev. iv. 12—14.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Pearce's Com.

would be gathered together from all parts of Judea. Arch Bishop Newcome paraphrases this passage as follows : " At that time shall appear plain tokens of my coming to execute judgment on the Jews : which shall cause great lamentation to all the tribes of the land : and there shall be as clear a display of my coming, and of my glorious power, as if I had been seen riding on the clouds of heaven, and thus giving sensible evidence that the fearful punishment was inflicted by me. And I will employ such means to make disciples throughout the world, when the power of the Jews, and their opposition to the gospel are at an end [or, to preserve those from perishing with the Jews, who persevere in their faith, and remember my warnings] as shall appear like sending heavenly messengers, to gather them from the four winds, from one extremity of the heaven to the other, or from the extremity of the earth to the extremity of the heaven."<sup>1</sup> That all which is mentioned in verses 30, 31, took place at the destruction of Jerusalem, is evident from verse 34 ; and as it is said, " they shall *see* the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven," so it is said Matt. xvi. 28. " There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they *see* the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

After having thus pointed out the signs of his coming, Jesus in the next place proceeds to show at what *time* it should take place, agreeably to the question of the disciples, already noticed, "*when shall these things be*, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?" Verse 3. He in the first place shows, that his coming would immediately succeed the signs of its approach : and uses a beautiful comparison to illustrate this fact.

<sup>1</sup> Observations, chap. iii. sec. 1.



See verse 32. "Now learn a parable of the fig tree: when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh." And then he makes the comparison, verse 33. "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it (his coming, as in ver. 30) is near, even at the doors;" to which he adds to remove all doubt, verse 34, "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." As surely as they might judge that summer was nigh, when they saw the fig tree put forth its leaves; so they might judge that the coming of Christ was near, when they saw the signs which he had pointed out: it certainly should come *during that generation*. It is a strange and unwarrantable perversion of the Saviour's meaning to represent him as saying, 'the race of human beings shall not pass from the earth till all these things be fulfilled;' and it is with difficulty we can think those sincere who apply the passage in this manner. Dr. Whitby says, "these words *this age or generation shall not pass away*, afford a full demonstration that all which Christ had mentioned hitherto, was to be accomplished, not at the time of the conversion of the Jews, or at the final day of judgment, but in that very age, or whilst some of that generation of men lived, for the phrase never bears any other sense in the New Testament, than the men of this age."<sup>1</sup>

Having thus stated the fact that his coming should take place *during that generation*, Jesus proceeded to shew that the particular *day or season* when it would happen, they would not know; and therefore they were required to be continually watchful, lest their Lord should come in an hour that they knew not. See verse 36. "But of that day and hour know-

<sup>1</sup> Paraphrase and Annot. on Matt xxiv. 34.

eth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." It was certainly known that the event would happen *during that generation*, but at what particular *day or season*, was not known. People who were not expecting it, would be engaged in their ordinary pursuits. Verses 37—39. "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." The friends and enemies of Christ would be engaged in the same pursuits; the former would be saved, the latter lost. Verses 40, 41. "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left." The work of grinding in Judea was done by women, in portable mills, which it took two of them to manage.

In verses 42—44, Jesus urges the duty of watchfulness, the necessity of which he had shown in the preceding verses. The whole relates to his coming at the destruction of Jerusalem, as verses 42 and 44 both show. "Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your *Lord doth come*." "Therefore, be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, *the Son of man cometh*."

The duty of faithfulness is next enforced on the disciples, from verse 45 to the end of the chapter. "Who then is a *faithful* and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord, *when he cometh*, shall find so doing." It must be perceived that this refers to

the coming of Christ at the destruction of Jerusalem, when he would reward his *faithful* disciples. "But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, *my lord delayeth his coming*," i. e. should flatter himself with such a vain hope, and should therefore be *unfaithful*, "the lord of that servant *shall come* in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Thus endeth the 24th chapter. And it will be seen, that the *unfaithful* disciples of Christ were to have the same portion with the *hypocritical* Jews, viz. the Scribes and Pharisees, to whom Jesus frequently and very justly gave that appellation. See Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16. xv. 7. xvi. 3. xxii. 18. xxiii. 13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29. And it should be remarked, that the punishment described in the last verse of chapter xxiv. is the same punishment, which, under several of the parables, we have shown was to be inflicted upon the unbelieving Jews. See all the passages where the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" occurs.

We are now brought, in regularly pursuing the context, to the 25th chapter, which most certainly is a continuation of the same subject which we have pursued through the 24th. See xxv. 1. "Then shall the kingdom of heaven, be likened unto ten virgins." There had been no other time previously mentioned, to which the adverb here used can be referred, except the time of *Christ's coming at the destruction of Jerusalem*. Then Jesus found some of his disciples watchful, and some careless, and the kingdom of heaven was *at that time* like ten virgins, five of whom were wise, and *watched* for the *bridegroom's coming*; the other five were

careless, and all slumbered and slept. The wise virgins answered to the "faithful and *wise* servant," xxiv. 45, who prepared for his lord's coming; and the *unwise* virgins answered to the evil servant, who flattered himself that his lord's coming would be delayed, and who therefore, prepared not for it. xxiv. 48, 49. And hence, in closing the parable of the virgins, Jesus makes an improvement of it by saying to his disciples, "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour, wherein the Son of man cometh." xxv. 13. The reader will perceive that this argument has the force of demonstration, if he will compare xxv. 13 with xxiv. 36, 42, 44, 50. The parable of the unfaithful servant, xxv. 14—30 was designed to enforce upon the disciples the duty of faithfulness in view of the coming of Christ, as the faithful servants kept the return of their Lord continually in view. The lord of those servants returned "after a long time," xxv. 19, and so the coming of Christ did not take place so soon as many expected it; and the unfaithful disciples flattered themselves that their Lord "delayed his coming," xxiv. 48. The punishment of the "unprofitable servant," is the same precisely with that of the servant who saying "my lord delayeth his coming," smote his fellow servants, and ate and drank with the drunken. Compare xxiv. 51 with xxv. 30.

We have now come to the parable of the sheep and goats. "When the Son of man shall *come in his glory*," &c. How any reflecting person can suppose that this refers to any other subject besides that which we have traced through the 24th and 25th chapters, we cannot conceive. The events mentioned in the parable of the sheep and goats, now before us, were all to take place, as we have

said, when Jesus came in his glory. In all his ministry, he never spake of any other coming but that which took place at the destruction of Jerusalem; and, in regard to this coming, he declared that some to whom he spoke should not taste of death till they saw it, Matt. xvi. 27, 28, that the disciples should not travel over the cities of Israel before it took place, Matt. x. 23, that the apostle John should live until it happened, John xxi 21, 22, and that the high priest of the Jewish nation should see it, Matt. xxvi. 64. By what rule of interpretation, then, is the parable of the sheep and goats, which certainly was to be fulfilled at the coming of Christ in his glory, to be applied to the supposed events of the future state of existence? Men must do violence to their own judgments, as well as to the word of God, when they give this parable such an application.

It should be remembered, that by the parable of the virgins, and of the unfaithful servant, Jesus designed to show the distinction that would take place at his coming, between faithful and unfaithful disciples; but the parable of the sheep and goats differs from the two former, inasmuch as it takes a wider range, and points out the punishment of the avowed enemies of Jesus. In this the separation is not between the different classes of Christians; but between the faithful disciples and the persecutors of the church. Hence Jesus goes back, distinctly repeats the circumstance of his coming, and describes the events which would happen at the time it took place. We think then we must have shown, to the satisfaction of every individual who shall peruse these pages, that this whole parable was completely fulfilled at the time of Christ's coming to destroy the Jewish state.

To the explanation here given a few objections may be raised, which we now proceed to answer.

1. It may be said, that no such judgment took place, at the destruction of Jerusalem, as is described in this parable. We think a slight examination of the subject will entirely remove this objection. At that time a distinction and division was made between the real friends of Christ, and his enemies, whether avowedly such, or professed friends. The former were rewarded for their watchfulness and fidelity, the latter were punished according to their iniquities. That the parable was then literally fulfilled, and that the friends of Christ were actually gathered on his right hand, and his enemies on his left, is not pretended. Nor does the parable assert any such thing; for if it is interpreted *literally*, it was *sheep* and *goats* only that were divided. These animals were used to represent good and bad men, as they had been by the Jewish prophets, Ezek. xxxiv. 17, Zech. x. 3, and the form of setting the good on the right hand, and the bad upon the left, was drawn from the customs of the Jews in their courts of justice, those who were adjudged innocent being ranged on the right of the presiding judge, and the guilty upon his left. The parable is, of course, a figure, designed merely to show that at the destruction of Jerusalem a distinction should be made between the friends and enemies of Christ; that the former would be recompensed for their devotion to their master and his service, and the latter for their unjust treatment of him and his disciples. All this certainly took place within forty years after the crucifixion.

2d. It may be objected, 'that no *coming of Christ* in the clouds of heaven, with the holy angels

took place at the destruction of Jerusalem ; that Christ has come but once, viz. when he was born of Mary ; and that his *second* coming is not to happen until the resurrection of the dead.' The proper answer to this objection is, that the coming of Christ at the destruction of Jerusalem, was not a real, *personal* appearance, but a virtual coming, in a display of divine power and majesty. It was a common thing among the Hebrew writers, to represent any signal interposition of Providence, or uncommon display of divine power, as the coming of the Lord. This figure occurs both in the Old and New Testaments. See the following beautiful passage from the Psalms : " Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad ; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein ; then shall the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord ; *for he COMETH, for he COMETH* to judge the earth : he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth." Psalms xcvi. 11—13. xcviii. 7—9. This, of course, did not mean a *personal* appearance of the Great Jehovah, but a manifestation of himself in the government of the world. Arch Bishop Newcome says, " the coming of Christ to destroy the Jews was a *virtual* and not a *real* one, and was to be understood figuratively, not literally." Again he says, " the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus is emphatically called *the coming of Christ*. The spirit of prophecy speaks particularly of this, because the city and temple were then destroyed and the civil and ecclesiastical state of the Jews subverted. The Jews also suffered very great calamities under Adrian ; but not so great as those under Vespasian : and the desolation under Adrian is not so particularly foretold. *But I think that any signal*

*interposition in behalf of his church, or in the destruction of his enemies, may be metaphorically called a coming of Christ.*"<sup>1</sup> Dr. Campbell remarks, on the expression, "*then shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven,*" "we have no reason to think that a particular phenomenon in the sky is here suggested. The striking evidences which would be given of the divine presence, and avenging justice, are a justification of the terms."<sup>2</sup> Kenrick observes, "the great power and glory of Christ were as conspicuously displayed at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the other circumstances which accompanied that event, as if they had seen him coming upon the clouds of heaven, to punish his enemies. When the prophet Isaiah represents God as about to punish the Egyptians, he speaks of him as riding upon a swift cloud for that purpose, Isaiah xix. 1. In that case there was no visible appearance of Jehovah upon a cloud; but it was language which the prophet adopted, in order to express the evident hand of God in the calamities of Egypt. The same thing may be said of the language of Christ upon the present occasion."<sup>3</sup> Dr. Hammond interprets Christ's coming, to be a "coming in the exercise of his kingly office, to work vengeance on his enemies, and discriminate the faithful believers from them."<sup>4</sup> Again he says, "the only objection against this interpretation is, that this destruction being wrought by the Roman Army, and those as much enemies of Christianity as any, and the very same people that had joined with the Jews to put Christ to death, it doth thereupon appear strange, that either those armies which are called abomin-

<sup>1</sup> Observations, chap. iii. sec. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Note on Matt. xxiv. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Expos. on Matt. xxiv. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Par and Annot. Matt. xvi. 28.



able, should be called *God's armies*, or that Christ should be said to come, when in truth it was Vespasian and Titus that thus came against this people. To this I answer, that it is ordinary with God in the Old Testament to call those Babylonish, Assyrian Heathen armies *his*, which did his work in punishing the Jews, when they rebelled against him. Christ is fitly said to come, when his ministers do come, that is, when either heathen men, or satan himself, who are executioners of God's will,<sup>1</sup> when they think not of it, are permitted by him to work destruction on his enemies."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Whitby is to the same purport.<sup>3</sup>

3. It may be objected that *all nations* were not gathered together at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, Matt. xxv. 32. We reply that *all nations* were gathered together in the sense in which the Saviour used that phrase. In chapter xxiv. 9, Jesus says to his disciples, "ye shall be hated of *all nations* for my name's sake." The same *all nations* which hated the disciples, were gathered together at the time of the coming of the Son of man. In verse 14, we are told that the gospel was to be preached unto *all nations*, before the end of the Jewish age; and in verse 30, that *all* the tribes of the earth should see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. All nations, in the sense which the phrase bears here, were assembled at the time spoken of: and that

<sup>1</sup> Although this may at first strike the mind of the reader as a strange figure, yet it is one frequently used at the present time. How common it is to say of a great bereavement which a family has been called to meet, it is a very afflicting *visitation* of Providence,—God has *visited* them with afflictions;—He has laid his hand heavily upon them. See Isaiah xxiii. 17. xxvi. 21. Jer. v. 9. vi. 15. xxvii. 22. xxix. 10. Micah i. 3. Acts xv. 14. 1 Peter ii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Matt. xxiv. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Par. on Matt. xxiv. 30.

there was a separation at that time, cannot be questioned. Eusebius informs us, that the Christians, observing the signs of the approaching danger, fled to the city, so that not one faithful disciple was lost ; while the enemies of Jesus were buried in a common ruin.

4. It may be objected, that as the fire spoken of, Matt. xxv. 41, was prepared for the devil and his angels, it must be in the future state, especially as the Jews were not punished in *fire* in this world. It may be said in reply, that nothing was more common with the sacred writers, than to represent the temporal judgments which came upon the Jews under the figure of fire. See these Notes pp. 5, 18, 19, 25, 51, 52, 62. See Isaiah ix. 19. "Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the *fire*." xxxi. 9. "The Lord's *fire* is in Zion, and his *furnace* in Jerusalem." Compare with this Matt. xiii. 42, 50. See also Jer. xvii. 27. "But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day: then will I kindle a *fire in the gates thereof*, and it shall devour the *palaces of Jerusalem*, and it shall not be quenched." The fire here spoken of is certainly descriptive of temporal judgments. Compare Ezk. xx. 47, 48. See also xxii. 18—22, where it is expressly said that Jerusalem is a *furnace*, that the people were blown upon with *fire*, and were *melted* there. In Joel ii. 3, the progress of the armies which went up to destroy Jerusalem is thus described: "A *fire* devoureth before them, and behind them a *flame* burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them." Jesus saw a pe-

culiar fitness therefore in choosing *fire* as a figure of the woes he denounced upon the Jews. It was a figure their prophets had used, and with which they were all familiar. And when it is said that this *fire* was prepared for *the devil* and his angels, it is a confirmation of the view we have taken of the parable. The Greek word *diabolos*, rendered devil, signified an adversary in general, and was very often applied to human beings. We have not room to quote all the passages at length. See 1 Tim. iii. 11, where *slanders* is a translation of *diabolous*, and women are exhorted not to be *devils*. In Titus ii. 3, the aged women are exhorted not to be *devils*, or, as *diabolous* is rendered, *false accusers*. In John vi. 70, Judas is called a devil. In the same sense the leading enemies of Jesus are called *the devil*; and hence it is said to the church in Smyrna, "THE DEVIL shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried," Rev. ii. 10. Here certainly the power by which the Christians were cast into prison is called *the devil*. The devil and his angels, Matt. xxv. 41, were the leading Jews and their emissaries; and those for whom the fire was prepared, were cast into it.

5. But it may be objected, that this fire cannot be said to have been suffered in this world, because it is called "*everlasting* fire," verse 41, and "*everlasting* punishment," verse 46. The proper answer to this objection is, that the word *everlasting* is very frequently used in the scriptures in application to things of a temporal nature, such as are universally admitted to be so. The land of Canaan was called an *everlasting* possession to the Jews, Gen. xvii. 8. xlviii. 4; but every body knows they were long since driven out of it. The *hills* are called *everlasting*, Gen. xlix. 26. The Levitical priesthood

is called *everlasting*, Exod. xl. 15, Numb. xxv. 13, but it was superceded by the priesthood of Christ, Heb. vii. 11, 12. The statutes of Moses were called *everlasting* statutes, Lev. xvi. 34, but they came to an end on the appearance of Christ. The mountains are said to be *everlasting*, Hab. iii. 6, but no one supposes they are indestructible, and must remain forever. The Greek word *aionios*, rendered *everlasting*, is derived from *aion*, and must receive its signification from it. Now that *aion* does not signify eternity, is evident because it is used in the plural number. It would be manifestly improper to speak of eternities; but we fall into the same impropriety when we make *aion* or *aionios*, signify of themselves, endless duration. And not only is *aion* used in the plural number, but words are added to extend its signification, even when numberless *aions* are spoken of. Thus Exod. xv. 18, literally rendered is, "the Lord shall reign from *aion* to *aion* AND FARTHER." Dan. xii. 3. "And they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars through the *aions*, or ages, AND FARTHER." Micah iv. 5. "And we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God, through the *aion*, and BEYOND IT."<sup>1</sup> As the word *everlasting* is then used in the sacred scriptures, in a large variety of instances, to signify limited duration, we say that when applied to punishment it ought above every other case, to bear that sense. Jehovah hath said that he "*will not cast off forever*; that though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies, for he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." Lam. iii. 31—33. This senti-

<sup>1</sup> See the Author's Ed. of Smith on Divine Government, pp. 217—227. See also Winchester's Dialogues, Ed. 1831, pp. 53—61. Balfour's 2d Inquiry, Ed. of 1826, pp. 311—340.

ment is utterly repugnant to the doctrine of interminable punishment ; and requires that the word *everlasting*, in the very few instances in which it is applied to punishment, should be understood in a limited sense, as it must be understood in most of the instances where it occurs. Speaking to the Jews of the divine chastisements, the author of the epistle to the Hebrews says, “no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous, nevertheless *afterward* it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” Heb. xii. 11. If this chastisement were strictly *endless*, how could it *afterward* yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness ? Is there any *afterward* to eternity ? Moreover, that the *fire*, Matt. xxv. 41, and *punishment*, verse 46, are not to be understood as endless in their duration, is evident from this circumstance. The parable in which they occur was spoken of Jews ; and the New Testament writers teach explicitly the salvation of the whole Jewish nation. See Rom. xi. 25, 26, and Heb. viii. 8—11.

6. The last objection which we can suppose may rest upon the mind of the reader is this : the same word is applied to *life* which is applied to *punishment*. It is rendered in one case “everlasting,” in the other “eternal ;” but it is the same word in both instances. If it does not signify endless duration when applied to punishment, how can it when applied to *life* ? On the other hand, if this life is to be enjoyed in the future state, why is not the punishment also to be suffered there ?

Answer : The same word is, in the same connexion, applied to different things, in other parts of the scriptures, when, as all acknowledge, one thing is temporal, the other endless. Hab. iii. 6. Rom. xvi. 25, 26, and others.

But the proper answer to the objection, in the case before us, is, we consider that the *life* spoken of in Matt. xxv. 46, is not to be enjoyed in the immortal existence into which the human race are to be raised after natural death ; but that spiritual life which the believer enjoys in this state. St. John says, “ We know, that we *have passed from death unto life*, because we love the brethren.” 1 John iii. 14. John knew that he had then already passed from death unto *life*; he was then in the enjoyment of spiritual *life*. Jesus saith, “ He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath (he then already possessed) *everlasting life*, and shall not come into condemnation, but *is passed* from death unto *life*.” John v. 24. And the original phrase here is the same which is rendered *eternal life* in Matt. xxv. 46. We believe that the “everlasting life,” in John v. 24, and the “life eternal,” in Matt. xxv. 46, are one and the same thing. This view of the subject completely removes the objection last introduced. For if the punishment and the life, are both allowed by us to be in the same state, the objection loses all its force. See of these Notes, pp. 12, 21, 22, 187.

Notwithstanding the “everlasting life” spoken of in the New Testament, is applied in these pages to that state of rest, purity and joy into which believers of the gospel entered, whenever they embraced it, the Author takes this opportunity to say, that he undoubtingly believes that a future state of immortality and incorruption is revealed in the New Testament. This, like the present existence, will be the gift of God ; and cannot, in the nature of things, be affected by the conduct of men in this life. Whatever men there enjoy will be the effect of the constitution in which they are raised

from the dead ; and it is our humble hope, inspired by the gospel of Jesus, that the whole human race shall be brought to the enjoyment of a sinless, incorruptible immortality.

May the perusal of these pages induce in the mind of the reader, a sincere desire to know the truth, and to gain a knowledge of the true sense of the sacred scriptures. May they inspire him with a reverence of the character of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; of the manner of his instructions ; of the purity of his morality ; of his wisdom in difficult circumstances ; of his kind regard for sinners ; and above all, of his obedience and resignation to the will of God. May they cause him to imitate, so far as human nature can do, the greatest pattern of wisdom, meekness, piety and benevolence, which the world hath ever seen.





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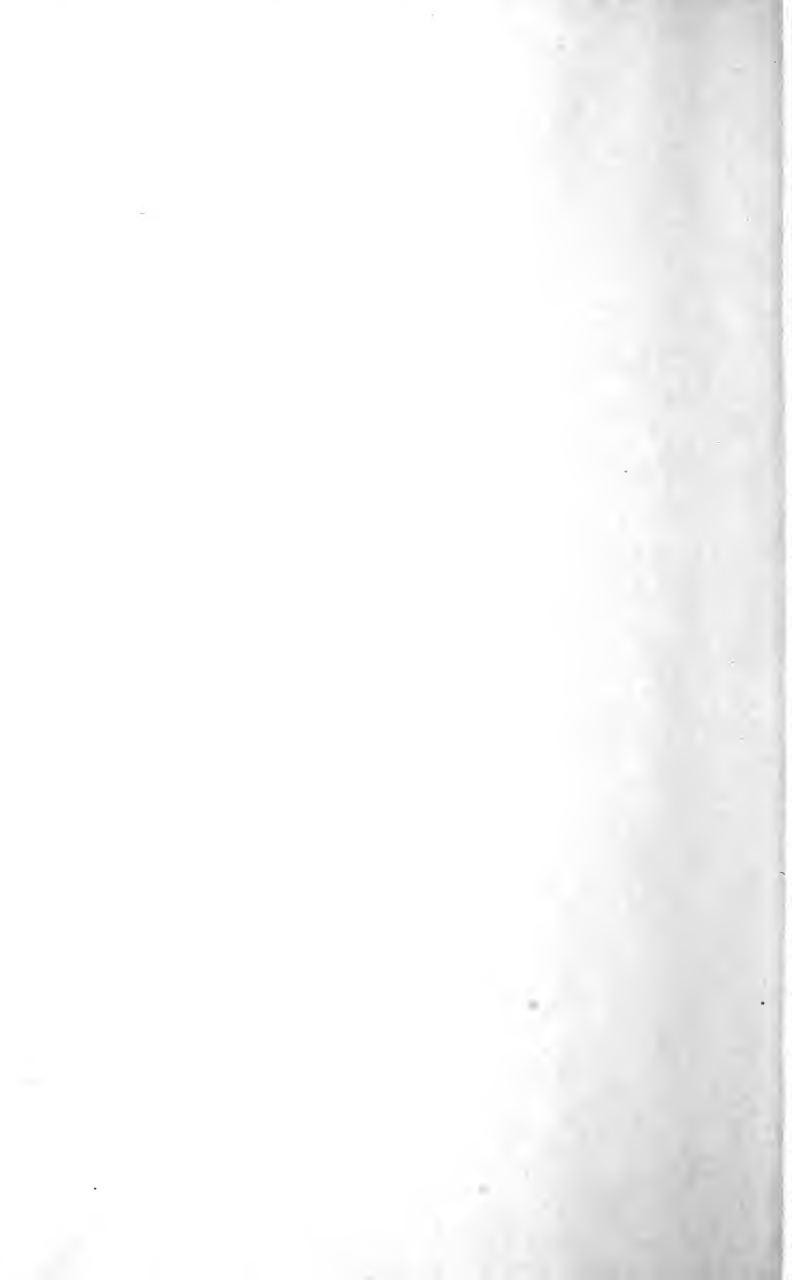
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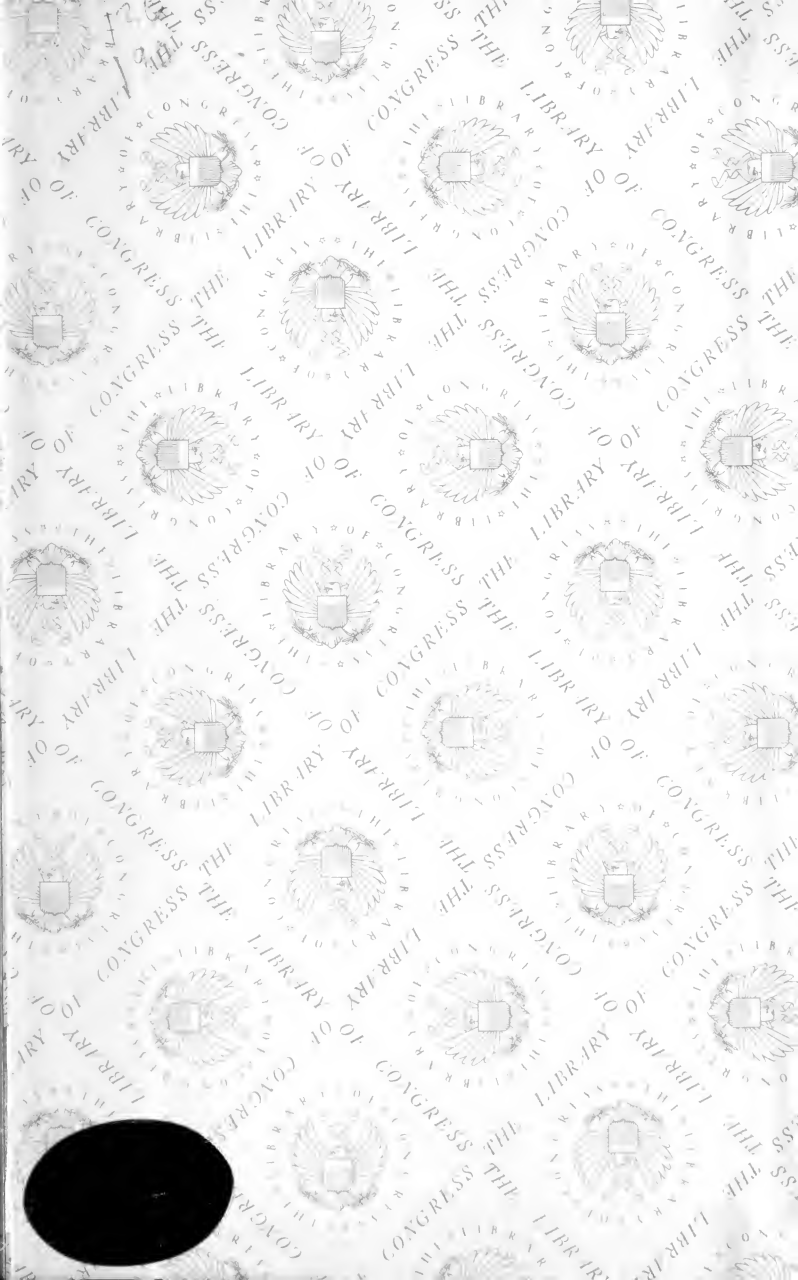


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